THE MAN ON HORSEBACK

FARNSWORTH

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THE MAN ON HORSEBACK

A Story of Life Among
The West Virginia Hills

—BY—
DR. F. F. FARNSWORTH

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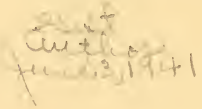

DEDICATED

To the Medical Profession of West Virginia, among whom I have found so many faithful friends and helpful critics, this little volume is respectfully dedicated. : : : : : : :

PREFACE.

This little book has not been written with any idea of exploiting my literary attainments, which are really hardly worth mentioning at all. Indeed my only excuse for inflicting this volume upon my friends is a very selfish one.

The fact is, I love to write and the preparation of this book has helped me to occupy a few spare hours very pleasantly.

The story told is one of fact and fiction. Fact, because it tells nothing but truths that have occurred and are daily occurring all over our land, and which have repeatedly come under my own observation.

The characters themselves are not imaginary but are selected from well known and oft observed types. The story is one of fiction so far as any particular person, place or thing is concerned.

The scenes are set in West Virginia because I have an abiding faith in the future greatness of my native state, and because I have a greater faith in the people who live in it. Its hills are *my* hills, its people are *my* people, and its problems are *my* problems.

When in the course of natural events, other people are solving newer problems and I have passed to other scenes; if this little book should be found on some discarded shelf and read by some one of the next generation, then my selfish ends shall have been met.

F. F. Farnsworth.

Charleston, W. Va.
June 1st, 1921.

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The Man On Horseback

Chapter 1

Among The West Virginia Hills

"Oh! The West Virginia hills, how majestic and how grand,

With their summits pointed upward toward our King Immanuel's land."

* * * * *

This story begins as all true stories should on a perfect September day. It is a story of the West Virginia hills. The story itself might just as well have happened anywhere else; indeed it has happened many times somewhere else, but this particular story could not have happened anywhere except among the West Virginia hills, because the people who make the story could not have lived anywhere except where they did.

There are many majestic and imposing mountains in our land; many wide and fertile valleys, dotted here and there by towns and cities, bound together by strands of wire and

rails of steel, and lighted by the mysterious electric spark, where man's supremacy is achieved in battles of clashing wits, and where painted beauty reigns supreme. There are colleges with stately columns and marble halls, and churches with tall spires and costly stained glass windows, where knowledge is imparted, scripture expounded, and where good men and women may fit and consecrate themselves to lives of usefulness.

But there are no mountains quite so beautiful, no valleys quite so verdant, and no rills that have quite the rippling sweetness as those among the foot-hills of the Alleghenies. It is among these hills we find the heroes of this story. They could not have lived anywhere else, because the beauty of the women is not that of painted china or of reflected lurid lights, but of pure virtue and perfect health, bred of the mountain air. Here the supremacy of man does not depend upon a frenzied clash of wits, but on physical endurance, keenness of eye, and litheness of muscle. Men and women whose ancestors survived because they were fittest, and who themselves survive because they are worthy sons and daughters of their parents.

This is a story of these people, and began on

a beautiful September morning several years ago when three people met for the first time; and although years have come and gone, and this story was not really a story at all until other actors entered it, these three people have remained a vital part of it, indeed without them there would be no story to tell.

One was a girl who became a woman, and who had rare beauty and keen intellect and who wasted them; who sought the joy of life and found only bitterness. She sacrificed her youth for what she thought was love, but found it only a tinkling cymbal; but who when too late found that her intellect might have been cultivated and beauty retained; that love may come, does come sometimes even late in life. This woman saved herself and learned much from life. She sacrificed much even a second time that she might remain sweet and pure as the blue hills of her nativity.

There is another woman in this story, but she was not at the meeting of the other three on this September morning. Of this woman we will learn much later for while this story begins without her, it could not end were she not in it. In fact, like all true stories of life, it does not really end then but goes on forever.

This is also the story of a man who grew up among the eternal hills, where fierce winds purify the air, and pure sunshine from unstained skies penetrate and brighten the soul. The man made mistakes even as you and I, but his mistakes were his best teachers, because he was a man and because he was like the hills from which he sprung. Like them he changed his raiment from year to year, brought forth fruit of unexpected kinds, presented a different appearance from different angles of observation, but in heart and form ever remaining the same.

The third person who appeared on this September morning is just as necessary to this story as the woman or the man, indeed there could be no story without him. But his part is not that of a hero, nor yet the part of a villian, but rather that of one who enjoys that which others have prepared; who reaps where others have sown, and who gathers the fruit from trees which other hands have planted. He picks the brown nuts from the ground like the lowly swine of his native forests, and like them grunts in satisfaction without looking upward to see whence such blessings came. He is a man of the hills, of the small sand dunes,

and like them unstable and unproductive. It is true he is not a very bad man, neither is he a very good man, but his goodness is like that of many Christians who will be compelled to seek forgiveness for their good deeds before entering the Pearly Gates.

The name of the girl who became a woman was Macel Adams, and her presence in Altoona on this particular September day was to apply for the village school for the coming session. She had just been assured of her appointment by Mr. Fitzsimmons, the village merchant, and had walked out on the platform in front of the store to better view the land of her coming sovereignty. Like all young girls, she loved beautiful dresses and becoming hats, and now there arose visions of what she could be able to buy with the first of her earnings. As she stood upon the platform slightly elevated from the ground, she looked more the matured woman than she really was, and as the bright sunlight played upon her auburn hair through a cheap but becoming hat of artificial flowers, the rosy, freckled face lighted by eyes of unusual brilliance radiated the happiness she must have felt. To the man on horseback with leggings and spur who a moment later halted

before her, she looked like the incarnation of all the September mornings since antiquity, garlanded with wild laurel blossoms sparkling in the early dew. The man removed a wide brimmed brown hat with one hand, revealing an enormous shock of well parted light brown hair, and with the other hand offered her a military salute, saying, "Good morning, Miss—?"

The girl smiled at the question in his eyes and said, "Adams. I am Macel Adams; I have just contracted for the Altoona school for this winter."

The man replaced his hat, and looking at her rather quizzically answered, "I am glad to meet you, Miss Adams, you will certainly have my sympathy in your efforts to teach the young Altoona sprouts to shoot. In my more unregenerate days I sometimes taught school myself and a few years ago taught one term here. You will find some nice people here, a few who are over-nice, and some who are not nice at all, but the kids, 'God save and bless them' they are all alike, as mischievous as young wild cats, and just about as tough."

"Oh!", said Macel, "I love kids. I'll not have any trouble with them, and I just know I shall love it here."

During this short conversation another young man had come up the platform steps, and standing just behind Miss Adams was looking directly into the face of the man on horseback, who, with a swift glance, had already appraised him from head to foot, but now with another salute and bowing low over his saddle horn, waved them adieu and cantered swiftly up the road.

Macel Adams, sensing another presence on the store platform, said "Who was that man?"

"Search me!" answered the newcomer, and turning around she looked squarely into the face of the "other man" who was equally a stranger to her. The man continued, saying, "My name is Leroy Morrison, and I just came up from the county seat last night to help Mr. Fitzsimmons in the store this winter, and have been having my trunk transferred from the depot to my room; so you see I am as much of a stranger here as you are. I just heard you tell the man on horseback that your name is Macel Adams and that you are going to teach school here this winter. I have just been kicking myself for a fool for agreeing to bury myself in this dead burg for a whole winter, for believe me, the girls here are about as bum a lot as

ever gathered at a depot to see the train go by. They were all out last night when I got off the train. But now things look much better, as I'm sure the 'new school marm' will take pity on the lonely clerk.''

It is more than likely that had Macel Adams heard all he said and fully interpreted his greedy look and oily tone of voice, she would have resented it, but being inexperienced in the strategy of young men, and like all her sex, susceptible to flattery, it may be that she would have considered this new acquaintance a lucky addition to her already happy morning. In fact, she really heard very little of what he said, for she had been intently watching the road up which the man on horseback had disappeared, but turning now, she answered, ''Oh! I am sure we will enjoy the winter here, but I must go home now,'' and glanced to where a bay horse, with a woman's side-saddle, was dozing in the shade of some bushes.

The young man immediately unhitched the horse and bringing it along-side the platform, assisted her to mount, making definite inquiries all the while as to where she lived and how far it was, and what she would think if he happened around some Sunday soon. She smiling-

ly answered that it would be all right for him to come, but added that in only two weeks she would be in Altoona to stay.

So as the happy girl hurried to her home to convey to her parents the news of her success, and Leroy Morrison entered Mr. Fitzsimmons' store to enter upon his duties as assistant and clerk, and the man on horseback cantered thoughtfully over the hills, the hand of fate was weaving a web, the strands of which were as fine as silk, yet they were strong as heart cords and as durable as time.

* * * * *

Chapter II

The Man On Horse Back

"For the noblest man that lives
There still remains a conflict."

* * * * *

John Scott had grown up among the typical surroundings of the ordinary mountain lad. His grandfather, Daniel Scott, had migrated from New England to Western Virginia about the year of 1820. He was a man of superior education and of unusual intelligence, and had

bred into his sons the same high standard of mental and physical fitness. John's father, Thomas Scott, was widely known as an expert in woodcraft, a crack shot with the rifle, and a hard man to throw in a tussle. He had taught his son all he knew of the woods, imparted to him all of his own physical endurance and muscular expertness, and with his Scotch-Irish wife, had passed on to him an intellect far above the average. John's mother had been dead many years, but she had lived long enough to be proud of her only son. After working on the new railroad being built through the county, John Scott had passed on into the lumber camps, and thence as a student to the State Normal School at Fairmont, from which he had graduated; an experience which was punctuated and delayed somewhat by varied experiences as a laborer, and several terms as teacher in some country school.

Now at the age of thirty five a somewhat experienced man of the world, still in riding breeches, leggings and spurs, with his blond, clean shaven face beneath a broad brimmed brown Stetson hat, clothed in the durable olive drab woolen shirt with its convenient twin pockets, and with his black slicker raincoat

strapped securely behind his cowboy saddle, he was riding more slowly than was his custom, from the scene of his morning adventure.

As to John Scott's family, occupation and religion, there need be little said here as they do not matter as a part of this story, but that you may know and understand him better, I will say that in occupation he might have been a farmer and cattle dealer, for he owned more than one farm, and dealt much in cattle. He might with equal ease have been a lawyer, for on his desk near a well oiled and much used typewriter could be seen a complete Code of Laws. He had been appointed a Notary Public in his twenty second year by Governor Atkinson and drew legal papers for the whole country around about, and advised the people in points of law. When a widow was entitled to a pension, or an old soldier wished his pension increased, it was to John Scott that they invariably came first. He was a competent land surveyor and was often called upon to act in that capacity, as well as defend hapless neighbors in lawsuits before some Justice of the Peace.

Indeed he might even have passed for a physician, for he knew much of medicine. His li-

brary was full of medical books and there were few flowers, weeds or vegetables the therapeutic value of which he was ignorant. Man and beast he served equally well, and there were few homes indeed where he was not always welcome.

No one had even seen him ride a horse that was lame or poor in flesh, still he often traded in horses, and to quote George Long, "It takes a mighty slick liar to lick John Scott in a 'hoss' trade."

By his own efforts he had accumulated some money, and besides some valuable real estate and farm stock, held considerable stock in two or three local banks and lumber companies. He was something of a politician as well, and could always be depended upon to deliver his district to the right man in any convention or primary election. Few political deals were pulled off without his knowledge, nor appointments made without his consent. He made frequent trips to the State Capital at Charleston, and occasionally was found in conference with Congressmen and Senators in Washington; and once at least, had been a visitor at the White House where the democratic Roosevelt had slapped him on the shoulder and asked why

he was not with him at San Juan Hill.

As to religion, he did not profess a great deal. He was a member of a church, however, and had been known to pray in public, but his prayers were not as those of other men. Somehow they sounded like a *Man* talking and pleading with a just *God,* and not like a sinful besmirched atom of dirt begging of some austere being. Squire Bailey expressed it by saying, "John Scott prays like, as a human being, he is just as good a one as the Almighty is as a God." However crudely or awkwardly this may have expressed it, it was very near the truth, for John Scott was a self-made man and gloried in it, and like all self-made men, had a very high regard for his Maker; but let us be thankful that he had not been spoiled in the making, for he was indeed better than most men. His ready hearty laugh, and somewhat courtly difference sat well on his big heavy shouldered frame, and made him much liked among the older women and mothers of the community.

The meeting with Macel Adams had awakened within him something which, without being dead, had long slumbered. Perhaps it was only his knowledge of her utter ignorance of

what she would have to contend with as a teacher of the Altoona school, for he well knew the difficulties she would have to overcome if she made the success she evidently thought was assured. Perhaps he was thinking of her lovliness and innocence which would make her a double mark for those without principle or morals who would of necessity be her daily companions there. Perhaps he was thinking of his own past, when a fair haired girl had trifled with his affections, only to cast him aside and marry another and older man because of his "greater expectations", and now, childless and repentant, often thought of what "might have been." Perhaps he was thinking of what might yet come to him, as in deep thought he crossed the river, climbed to the top of the mountain on the other side, and there hesitatingly stopped his horse and for many minutes gazed back into the valley below, where through a fringe of crimson tipped leaves he could see the school house at Altoona and the village divided in twain by the sparkling rails of the railroad track he had so lately crossed, all lying in apparent comfort on the banks of the mountain river.

It is said there are two roads in life, one

leading to joy, happiness, riches, power and the heart's desire; the other leading to all things unknown and as yet untried. Be that as it may, the man on horseback soon came to the crossing of two roads, and when his horse would have taken one, he was involuntarily directed to the other, and thence was urged over many miles of rough mountains until finally he came in sight of a cottage in the midst of a young orchard of apple and peach trees on a small well kept farm. Dismounting and tying his horse to the fence in front of the house, John Scott had just started to open the gate, when from within there came such a chorus of shouts and yelps and squeals as can only be heard when a band of mountain children give vent to their glee. Running, tumbling and apparently rolling over each other, came five little girls, the oldest about ten and the youngest probably not over three years old, each with freckled noses and reddish brown hair.

"Daddy Johnsy", "Daddy Johnsy", "Daddy Johnsy", and climbing upon the fence on either side of him, and on the gate in front of him, the youngest hanging on to his leggings. To an onlooker or a stranger it would have appeared that a long absent and much loved

father had just returned to his brood, or a king to his loyal and much loved subjects.

"Oh! Daddy Johnsy, come in. Guess what we got for dinner. Oh! Momsey here is Daddy Johnsy", and pulling and dragging him up the steps, he was pushed almost into the arms of a sixth and much older but not much larger edition of the same quintet. The woman in the door, who was evidently the mother of the crowing, joyous brood, received John Scott with almost as much affection as the children had shown. With sparkling eyes she grasped one of his hands in both of hers, led him to a rocking chair whereupon being seated, he was again besieged by the five girls, the three smallest climbing on his lap, the older ones hanging on to the sides and posts.

"Well, Miska, how are you getting along?" asked John. "I have meant to drop in for a long time, but have been very busy, and I knew you would let me know if you needed me."

"Oh! We have been getting along fine, John. We have about all our work done. I sold the wool to John Sparks, and Charley Williams bought the lambs and the brindle cow's calf. The girls have their clothes and are all ready and fixed to start to school when it be-

gins. Mistie's grandma wants her to come over to Altoona and stay with her this winter and go to school; I understand they are going to have a good teacher. I do not see how I can get along without her, but I *would* like for her to have a better teacher than she had last winter."

She said much more, but John Scott scarcely heard it. He was thinking of a beautiful young girl standing on a store platform, and wondering how she would look as the mother of five other girls, and what the years might do to her. At this stage both rumination and conversation were suddenly interrupted, for through the kitchen door there came a yellow streak of many canine strains, and with wagging tail, proceeded with paws and snout to scatter the five girls in all directions, and then before John was aware of it, he had been licked and kissed on mouth, nose, ears and chin. The girls, gathering themselves together, began to pound the dog, saying, "Get away, Pincher, he is not your Daddy", finally succeeded in getting him away. Pincher, who had been warily waiting the advent of a cautious whistle pig, had been absent when the guest first arrived, but when scenting the familiar visitor

was determined it seems to do his part in demonstrating the family joy. John then arose, went out, and unbridling and removing the saddle from his horse, turned him loose in the yard to graze, and soon sat down with Miska and the children to a well prepared dinner, at which Mistie, the elder girl, insisted on pouring his coffee and waiting on him. The history of John Scott's associations with Miska and her family is told in another chapter of this story, and it may only be said here that he remained with them until well into the afternoon, and when he left, he lifted Mistie, the elder girl, up behind him on the horse and carried her nearly out of sight down the road, and then releasing her, he said, "Mistie, I don't believe I would want to go to school at Altoona this winter if I were you."

"All right, Daddy Johnsy. I will do just what you think best," and climbing upon his stirrup, kissed him upon the mouth. "I love you, Daddy Johnsy, you know we all love you so."

John Scott for a lingering moment gazed down the road leading toward Altoona, then glancing back at the five figures still standing on the porch and watching him;—five did I

say, nay six, for Pincher was there too,—he took from his pocket two twenty dollar bills and giving them to the girl said, "Mistie, be a good girl, and such devotion as yours deserves some reward; *this* twenty dollars is to buy school books, and *this* one is for something for Momsey. You see that she gets what she needs most", and leaving the girl, rode rapidly away. He had wanted to give the money to Miska while at the house but was afraid she would not accept it.

John Scott had met and overcome many difficulties in life, had waged many a conflict and carried off his share of victories. Although he had carried his losses and disappointments bravely, he now began to feel that there was something very sweet in life which had so far been denied him, and to wonder if it had been the hand of fate, or was it really his own fault. As he rode on in silence, he came to another cross roads, and when his horse would have taken the one, he was gently directed to the other road, which, after ascending a hill, came presently to a country graveyard surrounded by a whitewashed fence.

Dismounting and hitching his horse, he opened the gate, then at once removing his hat

and walking slowly between rows of Arbor Vitae, he stooped and plucked a branch of Live-forever, which he carried in his hand until presently approaching a grave marked by a granite monument, on which was chiseled the single word "MOTHER". After digging deeply with his bare fingers into the grass covered clay of the mound, he planted the sprig of Live-forever. Then crossing his arms on the granite base, dropped to his knees, and with bowed head and tear dimmed eyes, remained many minutes in silence, then arising he slowly left the cemetery and mounting his horse, rode away.

* * * * *

Chapter III

Miska Brown

"Woman, fairest of creation,
God's last and best gift to man."

* * * * *

Some twenty-five years before the opening of this story, a man afoot with neither grip nor baggage of any kind, and leading a little girl of four or five years, stopped at a lonely

farmhouse late one evening and asked to stay all night. Such requests were never refused by the mountain people, and the man and child were permitted to remain. After supper, and while waiting for bedtime, the farmer sought information as to his visitor's name, home, and why and how he came to be walking through the country. Common tramps at that time were unknown in the mountains, besides this man, although without any extra supply of clothes for either himself or the child, seemed clean, and acted like a man of breeding and intelligence. The stranger said his name was Cook, that he had originally lived in Ohio but had later moved to Virginia where his wife had recently died. He further stated that he had disposed of all his household goods and was walking through the mountains back to his old home. While it looked rather peculiar to farmer Clark that a man would undertake such a trip with a four or five year old child, who was extremely small even for that age, he said little, but presently showed the man to a bed room which was entered from a door on the front porch, the child sleeping with her father. In the morning on calling the man to breakfast, it was found that he had disap-

peared and the child was sleeping soundly alone. The telephone had not yet penetrated the hills and means of communication and of acquiring information was meager and slow, but the most careful inquiry in all directions failed to find any person who had seen the man and child before they stopped at farmer Clark's, neither was there any trace of the man after leaving there. Letters were written to different parts of Ohio and Virginia in an effort to trace the man or his family. In fact, farmer Clark made a trip to the vicinity of Tiffiin, Ohio, where he surmised from the man's conversation his former home might have been. No trace of the man or his relatives were ever found—neither was there ever any definite knowledge as to whether or not the man was really the father of the child. So the actual age of Miska Cook, as well as any tangible evidence of her real name and parenthood, remained and still remains to this day absolutely unknown. The child while very bright, was also very small and could help very little. She said that the man was her papa, and they had walked, and walked and walked a long time, but appeared to have no recollection of any woman who might have been her mother.

Fortunately, farmer Clark and his wife were kind people, and having no children of their own, were glad to keep the little girl and raise her as their own child. Farmer Clark's land adjoined that of Thomas Scott, and so it came about that the only son of Thomas Scott became the childhood playmate, protector and friend of the little adopted daughter of farmer Clark.

John was apparently five or six years older than Miska, but the difference seemed much greater as the girl grew slowly and the boy repidly became a young man. During the earlier years they were almost daily companions, and on Sundays were together the whole day through. If the Clarks were visitors at the Scott home one Sunday afternoon, the Scotts were almost as certainly to be found at the Clark's the following Sunday; and often after the day's work was done, or in bad weather when no work could be done at all, Thomas Scott would say to his wife, "Let's go down to Clark's awhile", or perhaps farmer Clark would say to Mrs. Clark, "Suppose we go up to Scott's this evening", or if perchance no such thing was said, Miska would say to Mrs. Clark, "Momsey, I want to go up and play

with Johnsy", whereupon the whole family would go. John Scott was just a little too large for such suggestions, but often on such days he would ramble around the house and barns, and finally when his restlessness had gotten the better of him, he would say, "Believe I will go down to Clark's awhile—won't be gone long."

In those days before the advent of telephones, railroads and daily mails, the only way of communication was by word of mouth from neighbor to neighbor, except occasionally when some man would come riding through the country spreading news of some very unusual occurrence, or when on Sunday mornings the heads of families got together to discuss the neighborhood news before Sunday school at the log church on the hill.

The intimacy between the Clarks and Scotts had dated from the day the two young men had bought adjoining land in the wilderness, and had continued without a single misunderstanding or hard thought, and while the elders of the family were engaged in more serious discussions, Miska would often climb upon John's lap and pull his ears, twist his nose, or putting her thumbs in the corners of his mouth, pull

until his lips almost cracked, then vicariously quoting, "Eeny, meeny, miney, mo;—one, two, three and here we go", then kissing his forehead, then his nose and chin, throw her arms around his neck, saying, "Oh! Johnsy, I loves you so", and then curling up in his lap like a kitten, pretend to go to sleep. Sometimes she would say, "Johnsy, boy, when we grow up we will get married, won't we, and live in a great big house on a hill and have five little girls and one little boy?".

"But what name will we give the little boy?" John would ask.

"Oh! he will be John Junior, of course he will", Miska would retort, "but what *will* we call so many little girls?"

"I think we will call the first one Mistie because she will be so much like you", John would generally answer, "and then we will name the other four *after* her."

The child, strange to say, had never seen a doll when she came to farmer Clark's, and apparently was never interested in one, but she was very industrious in building play-houses, and every piece of broken dish or colored paper she could collect soon found a place in her pantry.

She grew very slowly, but was a veritable little hurricane in everything she did, and before the time she was big enough to attend the district school, she could make corn bread, fry meat and sweep the floors. At school John was always the champion and protector of Miska, but his protection was little needed, for she was such a smart, lovable child that every one was her friend and she was a general favorite in the whole community. And so they grew up that way, John into a big strapping, jolly young man, and Miska into a winsome, sprightly damsel. In time she ceased to climb upon his lap, but their relative size remained the same—John just about twice the size of Miska. They often went to apple cuttings, bean stringings and other local gatherings of young people together; but sometimes John escorted some other young lady home after finding that Miska had found other company herself. Things continued in this way until John met the fair haired girl who jilted him for the older man with "greater expectations". After this he was seldom at home, sometimes he worked in the new lumber camps, several of which were just starting up, and sometimes on the new railroad which was being built. Then John went

away to Fairmont to attend the State Normal School, and remained through the summer vacation to work in the mines not far away. For the next two or three years he attended and taught school alternately. It is true he came home occasionally, and one winter during his mother's illness, taught school at Altoona that he might be near her; but after her death he returned to school and soon after got a letter from Miska saying that she was going to marry Fred Brown, a neighbor boy, in fact she said she would be married by the time the letter reached him. This information gave John some severe heart pangs, and it must be confessed that for many nights after, he could picture a little brown head with two heavy unruly braids, and would often drift into slumber on vague delirious dreams of her bright eyes beneath a heavy dark fringe of lash, and somehow in these eyes he could always see his own image.

When he returned home after graduating the next year, he found Miska with a tiny girl baby which had been named "Mistie", and Fred working on a nearby saw-mill. Miska met him joyously and he was compelled to inspect the baby, hold it in his arms and kiss it.

John felt very awkward and was under some constraint, but Fred received him as he would Miska's brother. After staying all night with them, John walked with Fred to the saw-mill where he worked, but finally coming in sight of the other men, he stopped, saying, "Fred, I'm glad to see you and Miska married and happy. You may not realize it, but her welfare and happiness means very much to me. She has been the only sister I ever knew, and she is the most innocent girl I ever associated with. Nobody knows who she is or where she came from, but of one thing I am sure, there is not a drop of vulgar blood in her veins. I want you to be good to her and make her happy every day of her life. If you do this, I am your friend in every need and under all circumstances. If you do not do it, I'm afraid I will be compelled to skin you alive. I know this kind of talk is needless for I know you and I know her, and I think you are the only man I would have wanted to marry her. You see, I love her very much".

All this had been said with much feeling, and when he had finished his voice was almost broken and his eyes were full of tears.

"That's all right, old man", answered Fred,

grasping his hand. "I see you and I both are going to live a long time. I know I'm a very unworthy but a mighty lucky dog and Miska will never have cause to complain as long as I am able to work. And I want you to come and see us often, John, we have had a lot of good times together as boys, but I suppose now that you have got an education, you will leave the mountains entirely".

"No, Fred, I expect to stay right here. It will be very lonely without mother, but father still needs me, and if I can be of any use to anybody or accomplish anything, it will be among the people who have warmed and fed me so often, and among the hills that I know so well. I will never be far away, and if you and Miska need me, I will be ready."

With this they parted, Fred Brown to his daily labor, and John Scott to tackle the biggest job that can ever confront a man, that of laying the corner stones and planning the structure of a life of usefulness.

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Chapter IV

The New School Teacher.

"Some women are wise, some are otherwise,
but all are likewise."

* * * * *

Macel Adams, the new school teacher at Altoona, lived with her parents and a large family of younger brothers and sisters on Sang Run several miles west of the village. Her father, Samuel Adams, had come from Virginia with his father when very young, and after marrying, had settled in the woods and hewed out a farm on Sang Run, and there reared his family of which Macel was the oldest. At sixteen she was a typical red cheeked mountain girl who had shown such aptness in her studies that her parents encouraged her to prepare herself for teaching, which was about the only way that the mountain girls could hope to lift themselves above the common herd and earn money enough to dress becomingly. After faithfully applying herself during the winter months, she spent two summers attending a subscription school at Centerville, taught by Prof. Armstrong, and when she took

the teacher's examination at the age of seventeen, had no trouble in securing a certificate to teach.

Her application for the Altoona school was probably unwise, but the lure of village life on the railroad, with such social opportunities as might be available, was too great for resistance. Mr. Fitzsimmons, the trustee, who had employed her, feared for her youth and inexperience, but was captivated by her evident good sense and her winning smile, and when criticised for employing a young girl who had no teaching experience whatever, retorted, "Well, if she handles them kids as well as she handled me, she will be a blooming success". The girl herself was overjoyed at her good fortune in securing a certificate to teach, and a school in the village. Her experience in district schools was confined to the home school on Sang Run where they had had some very good teachers, and such visits as she had made to surrounding schools. She had read the "Hoosier Schoolmaster" and felt sure it would be easy to do a better job than the one therein portrayed. She had also read "Jean Mitchell's School" and from it had gotten some very high ideals which she was determined to carry out.

She was too young to realize that ideals are somewhat prosaic things when attempts are made to establish them in real life. But she had her ideals, as we all have had, and who can say she did not make an honest effort to realize them.

She secured boarding with a family by the name of Proudfoot and thereby scored her first advantage, for the three Proudfoot boys were the worst in the neighborhood, and she hoped to completely win them over and conquer them by kindness at home. And then Mrs. Proudfoot was a very talkative woman and always knew everything that was said or apparently thought of in the neighborhood. Macel would have the opportunity of learning very accurately what people thought of her as a teacher, and probably learn of her faults and mistakes through others before she realized them herself. But Mrs. Proudfoot, although something of a gossip, was very truthful and a good woman, having considerable influence in and around the village.

The following Monday the school was opened with a considerable number of the smaller pupils present, the larger ones entering later after the usual fall work was done. Job Proud-

foot, the smartest and ugliest boy of the whole lot, was there and was given a seat well up in front. Job's ears were very large, standing out from his head like the painted sign at Power's Livery Stable, and when having nothing else to do, he amused himself by wiggling them. Sometimes he wiggled one ear at a time, and then for a change would wiggle the other. Some times both ears were brought into action, and since he had the same control of his scalp, he would add the additional diversion of moving his hair up and down or back and forth like a wig on springs, ending by making all his hair stand on end. Through all these performances Job would look as serious as a Judge, and when the teacher sought the cause of the amused giggling of the children behind him, his face was as expressionless as that of a brass monkey, which indeed it somewhat resembled.

Sterling Loudin was another boy who started to school that Monday morning who caused much mischief. Sterling was larger than Job, and had an "awful big" nose. When going forward or returning from the recitation seat, or when for one purpose or another he had an opportunity to cross the room, he would aim

to get the stove pipe between him and the other pupils, and by moving his head slightly and twisting his nose, he could make the end of that member visible first on one side of the stove pipe and then the other without apparently changing his position. While doing this he would press his knuckles with his thumb causing them to snap so that withal it appeared that his nose was snapping as it flipped. This was so amusing to the smaller pupils that it was impossible to keep them quiet. While passing the larger ones in the aisle he would invariable move the end of his nose to one side as if to permit them to pass. At other times he would grasp his nose in both hands and apparently use all his strength to unscrew it, grinding his teeth so that it sounded very much like he was with difficulty accomplishing that feat. When the teacher sought the cause of such commotion as was sure to follow, she would find Sterling industriously perusing his studies, and the other children looking silly and apparently ignorant of their own amusement.

Other pupils had similar accomplishments, and when the first day of school had closed, Macel Adams still had her ideals but she was

seriously thinking of trading the least valuable of them for a good serviceable rawhide, if such an exchange were possible.

As she passed Mr. Fitzsimmons' store that evening Leroy Morrison came out and asked her how school had gone that day. She answered him that it had gone fine, and after a few minutes conversation in which he tried to make as good an impression as possible, he asked if he might come up to Mr. Proudfoot's awhile that night, but Macel excused herself on the ground of having so much work to do, which was really true. Then he said, "Well, tomorrow is prayer meeting night at the church and I am sure I would break a life long habit and go to prayer meeting if you will be there and let me go home with you". Macel had no intention at that time of attending prayer meeting, but after hesitating a moment, she said, "Yes, I will be there." Then said, "Good-bye," and went on up to her boarding house.

Tuesday at school was very much like Monday. In the evening Macel accompanied Mrs. Proudfoot to church and, of course, seemed very much surprised that Leroy Morrison wanted to go home with her, but appeared to offer no objection to him, nor later when he

ardently made love to her in the Proudfoot parlor for a good three hours.

Wednesday at school was a trying day, for the first thing Macel heard when coming in sight, was some kind of a new song by the pupils in which every stanza and the whole chorus seemed to be composed of the single phrase, "Teacher's got a feller." It was squalled and bawled all over the playground, written on blackboard and slates, whispered across aisles, and mimicked and depicted in pantomines and grins. The day was a failure so far as discipline was concerned, but after school was out and the teacher was standing tired and discouraged, the sight of a man on horseback cantering into Altoona must have had some peculiar effect on her feelings and thoughts, for she hurriedly left the window and putting on her hat, hastened out into the school house yard where she could get a better view of John Scott as he passed along the road below her. If she expected him to look toward her, she was disappointed, but then it may be that he was not so indifferent as it seemed, and that he supposed the teacher as well as the children had left the house for their homes.

At the end of the first week Macel felt like

she had been teaching school at least a thousand years and had earned a million dollars. But to the ordinary observer it probably would have appeared that she had taught a week and had gotten along fairly well. To those most interested, the pupils and parents, the greatest thing that had happened was "the teacher's got a feller", followed by the prophesy that "We'll have another courtin' school this winter."

The general impression seemed to be that a school teacher had no right to "have a feller," and most of them agreed perfectly that this particular *new* teacher had almost publicly "set her cap" for the new clerk, and they actually produced eye witnesses to the fact that she had engaged herself in conversation with him within five minutes after contracting for the school. "I knew she was a fast worker", declared Mrs. Fitzsimmons, the merchant's wife, "the way she worked Fitz for the school, and now, of course, we'll have another courtin' school."

On Friday evening Mrs. Adams came with horses and took Macel home for the week end. Her experiences during the week had been very different from what she had expected, but that

was because of her youth. Nearly every young girl who has gone out as she did to meet and make life, has met and made it in very much the same way. Some have been wise and conquered it, some have been otherwise and failed, but all have been likewise in their anticipations and hopes.

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Chapter V

A Midnight Scrap

"The man who keeps a conscience pure,
Through toil and danger walks secure."

* * * * *

The Proudfoots where Macel boarded had gone to spend the Sunday with some relatives, and were not expected to return until the early train Monday morning, so when she returned to Altoona Sunday evening after spending the week end at home, she went to the hotel to spend the night. There were, in fact, two public houses in the village, although only one of them was really a hotel. The other was the home of a widow who had herself borne a good reputation, but she had several daughters who

were not so well thought of, in fact their conduct was so questionable that the home had fallen into very bad repute, and finally became the rendezvous of many bad characters from the lumber camps and other places where men were employed. From the fact that this place had the only organ in the village and the girls, one or the other, seemed almost constantly to be playing it, and usually to an audience of half drunken men, the place soon acquired the title of "The Opera House". The place rapidly degenerated into a den of vice where men drank and women danced, and the basest and most sensuous passions were satisfied. No respectable woman would visit the "Opera House", and no man who valued his reputation would be caught there; although the fact remains that many who did value their reputations were sometimes there, but their coming and going was at an hour when the public eye was closed. No doubt the women in the house would have been tarred and feathered and the house itself would have been blown up with dynamite by indignant citizens had it not been for the pity and respect they had for the widow herself, whom they believed to be the helpless victim of her family's failings.

But while every thing seemed bright and joyful at the Opera House, many a young man who had been "treated right" by one or the other of the girls, found it necessary to seek further "treatment" from Dr. Johnson, who probably received more confessions of sin in his office than the good Priest in his confessional.

The other place was really a hotel, and while there was much drinking and carousing going on, a guest who attended to his own business found very little to complain of. The proprietor was a woman who liked a drink of whiskey or beer and did not object to it being brought into the house, and it is said sometimes kept it for sale herself. The place was usually rather quiet, except at times when some noisy roysterer came in late from the Opera House and demanded a place to sleep. The usual quiet of the hotel, however, was generally disturbed from Saturday night until Monday morning of each week. The laborers from the railroad and lumber camps usually came to secure whiskey or beer, and visit the Opera House, and generally filled the hotel to overflowing. During these times, drinking, gambling and swearing sometimes became so monotonous that the

guests were frequently compelled to resort to fierce and often bloody fist fights for mutual amusement, and many a cracked skull proved conclusively that it was not an immovable body when coming in contact with the irresistible force of a beer bottle.

On the Sunday evening Macel came to the hotel to spend the night there were very few around. The weather was warm and the night pleasant and all the men who had been there from the camps had returned. However, about eight o'clock, five young men came down the railroad track and passing the Opera House without stopping, came on to the hotel. They were from a lumber camp a few miles away, were well behaved, fairly well dressed and clean. It is true they occasionally visited the closet under the stairway where Mrs. Coon usually kept a jug with a red ribbon tied around its neck to indicate that it was full; when the jug became empty, a black ribbon was substituted. Knowing something of the character of the men who usually came from the camps, Macel at first would have little to say to them, but as the evening wore on and Mrs. Coon herself had taken several nips from the jug, the crowd became so intimately social that Macel

was almost compelled to take part in it, besides, she had been persuaded to take just a little "nip" also, and for some reason or other after that, she did not care so much when one or two of the young men hugged and kissed her.

About midnight, however, Mrs. Coon told the men they would have to go home as she was going to bed, but this they refused to do until they had all been given another drink, and even after that, would not budge an inch until Mrs. Coon and Macel had taken a drink also. They then agreed to go home if the two women would walk up the track a short distance with them. This Mrs. Coon agreed to do to get rid of them, but Macel refused. Mrs. Coon assured her that as the night was warm and pleasant and the moon shining almost as bright as day, and they would not go far; it would be the easiest way to get rid of the men, and Macel finally agreed. We are sorry to admit it, but she was too much under the influence of drink to think very straight.

At first the crowd all walked together, then three of the men walking faster, got some distance ahead. One of the other men walking with Mrs. Coon, and the other with his arm around Macel and making love to her very ve-

hemently, was making plans which she in her befuddled mind little dreamed of.

The women proposed to return a time or two, but were urged on by the men until finally they passed out of the cleared ground and into the shadows of a forest through which the railroad passed and near where the Trout Lumber Company had formerly had one of its mills, still evidenced by tumble down shanties and great heaps of sawdust. Here the women refused to go further and some of the men really seemed anxious to get rid of them and wanted to go on, but the two men who were directly with the women told the others to go on and mind their own business. This precipitated a small quarrel, which would not have amounted to much had not Macel screamed when the man with her attempted to lead her away into deeper shadows.

"Let go that girl," demanded one of the men.

"You mind your own business and go to hell," retorted the other.

"I'll show you who is going to hell," answered the first, making a dash at the second. Some of the others rushed in but the fight was only delayed. Men who are under the influence of liquor and not too honorable when per-

fectly sober, are liable to vent their passion in very destructive ways.

Knives flashed, more than one gun cracked, the women screamed and men cursed not only each other, but God and the Devil as well, as is generally the case at such times.

Breaking loose from the mass of crazy fighting men, Macel Adams ran screaming down the railroad track, but seeing the shadow of another man rapidly approaching, fell fainting on the ties where she was picked up a moment later by John Scott and carried limp and unconscious into the shadow of some trees. Laying the girl gently on the ground with her head slightly elevated and drawing her knees up to better relax the muscles of the abdomen and chest, he took a leather case from his pocket, and extracting a small vial, applied a part of the contents to her mouth and nose, letting a few drops trickle on her tongue; then replacing the vial and gently feeling the pulse, awaited the results.

She did not revive at once, and John was about to repeat the application to her mouth and nose, when he heard a noise and looking toward the railroad track, saw two of the men supporting Mrs. Coon, who appeared to be in-

jured and whom they were evidently trying to get home. His first impulse was to call to them, but realizing that they could do him little good with an unconscious girl and would have their hands full in getting Mrs. Coon home, he kept quiet; he was also prompted by a desire to prevent his presence being known to them at all.

Waiting a few minutes longer, he again applied some of the contents of the vial to her mouth. This soon revived her, but as for John himself, he found his "last state worse than his first", for after muttering incoherently for awhile she became hysterical, and for the next half hour it took all the assurance and persuasion he could muster to quiet her fears and convince her that things were all right and that he would see that she got home safely. He did not convince her of all of this but did succeed in getting her fears quieted somewhat.

After waiting awhile longer he told her that he had left his horse down the road a piece and that he would go and get it and they would go back to the village. He did not go to his horse, however, but back up the railroad track to where the fight had occurred. He had no idea of leaving the place before finding out if he could just what had happened.

On approaching the place of the recent fight, he saw one man lying on the track between the rails, and upon examination, found that he was dead. He had evidently received a shot in some vital part, and had died at once. Further examination disclosed two other forms lying on a pile of sawdust. He at first supposed them dead also, but soon found that they were both alive. One had received a bullet in the arm which had badly shattered the bone, and had various other wounds about the face and body, none of which appeared to be serious. The other man was not badly hurt, and said they were waiting for the return of the other two men who promised to bring Dr. Johnson back with them.

Seeing that he could do no good and not wishing to be there when the other men returned, he went after his horse, which he led up the railroad track near where he had left Macel, whom he found had become alarmed at his long absence and was just about to strike out by herself. The girl was again hysterical and well nigh crazed, and could scarcely walk or stand alone. She kept crying out that she was ruined and wished herself dead until John, out of patience with trying to reason with her,

finally picked her up and placed her astride his horse behind the saddle, rapidly mounting in front of her, and rode slowly down the track. After leaving the railroad track he rode much faster, and when about half way to the village, saw two men returning leading Dr. Johnson blindfolded between them. The railroad was some distance away at this point and John Scott and the half unconscious girl passed them unobserved.

At first Macel had protested against being placed astride the horse behind John, but soon had both arms around him holding tight, and with her head pressed tightly against his back, continued a series of hiccoughy little sobs until they reached the village, when she positively declared she would not again enter the hotel.

"Where do you want to go then?" asked John. Macel said she might go to the school house and stay there the remainder of the night, he told her that would not do, but he also understood the impossibility of calling some of the neighbors out of bed and leaving her with them. Finally John wanted to know why in creation she could not go back to her boarding house at the Proudfoots where she had better have gone in the first place and not

to the hotel, and learned for the first time that there was no one home there. Somehow this information had been overlooked by her in what she had already told him.

"Can you get into the Proudfoot house?" asked John.

"Yes", answered Macel, "I can get in all right".

"That settles the question," answered John. "We are going there."

By this time the moon was very low and the night was almost dark, so they passed easily through the village and on to a point near the gate leading to Mr. Proudfoot's. There John led his horse out into the woods and securely tied him to a sapling, then with Macel, proceeded to the house, which was easily entered through the kitchen door. Once inside, the girl was determined to tell him everything that had happened and try to vindicate herself, but he said, "Not now, you go to your bedroom, change clothes and thoroughly examine yourself to see if you have any marks or wounds of any kind. You may be hurt somewhere and have not yet realized it. If you find anything, call me; if you do not find anything, go to bed, but call softly and let me know it. I will wait around awhile and then slip away."

In a few minutes she called to him and going to the bed room door, he found her safe in bed. She said nothing was wrong but she wanted to tell all about the night's happenings and did not want him to think she was a bad girl. John said, "No, I can't stay here long. It would be dangerous for both of us. The thing for you to do is to try to get some sleep, then in the morning get up and go to school as usual and say nothing to any one about being at the hotel, except to tell Mrs. Proudfoot that you went to the hotel, but they were so noisy and rough that you would not stay and so came up here and stayed alone. It is not a very good story, but it is the best we have to tell, and leaves opportunity for further explanation if necessary. Some time before long I will see you and we will talk matters over."

She looked so helpless and distressed that John could not leave her without some further encouragement, so taking her hand in one of his, he gently stroked her brow with the other, saying, "Things are going to turn out just right, but if they don's, remember there is a fellow by the name of John Scott,—just let him know about it." But his inward thoughts were, "You poor little girl, you have succeeded

in making a darn fool of yourself, and I am afraid you are going to have to pay the price."

After saying, "Goodnight. I'm off," he left, but stopping in the yard to roll a cigarette, he decided to wait and watch awhile. He sat there for another half hour smoking, and then making his way to his horse, mounted and rode away toward home where he arrived soon after daybreak.

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Chapter VI

Echoes From the Night

"Oh! What a tangled web we weave,
When first we practice to deceive."

* * * * *

Youth is a wonderful, glorious, passionate time, breathless with suspense and visions of the unknown future. Plans, visions and dreams create a golden setting of all that must come and all that may be done in life. Mountains of impossibilities are overcome, and the world set on fire by the mind of youth as it hikes and dances its strenuous way along the pathway of imagination leading to endeavor. Every sun-

rise is painted by hope, but every sunset is shadowed by disappointment, and every path we tread is littered by mistakes.

The morning after her night of adventure, Macel carefully removed from her clothes all trace of her rude experience, got her own breakfast, and after preparing a noon day lunch, went to school as though nothing had occurred. She had an impression that every one already knew all about the disgraceful orgie in which she had participated, and expected that every child at school would want to tell her about it. She hoped that her name would not be connected with it but could hardly hope that it would remain permanently unknown.

Nothing happened, however, and nothing was said and it was with a feeling of relief, mingled with suppressed foreboding, that she stopped at the hotel to get the package of clean clothes she had left there the evening before. When she asked for Mrs. Coon she was told that she was upstairs in bed sick, and wishing to stay just as short a time as possible, she took her package and left, saying, "Tell Mrs. Coon that I will be in to see her in a day or so."

The Proudfoots had returned early in the day and Macel lost no time in explaining to them

that she had returned to Altoona on Sunday evening and gone to the hotel for the night, but there were several men there and they became so boisterous that she really feared for her safety, and that in any event she could not afford to remain in such company, so she slipped out, leaving her package of clothes and came to the Proudfoot home where she remained alone all night.

Mrs. Proudfoot looked thoughtful and then said, "That was right, of course; I don't see why you went there at all," and a moment later asked the question, "Who came with you up here?"

Marcel answered, "No one, no one at all, I was by myself."

"Was Leroy Morrison here last night?" asked Mrs. Proudfoot.

"No, he was not here," answered Macel. "Why?"

"Well," said Mrs. Proudfoot, "he is about the only fellow around here who smokes cigarettes, and while sweeping the yard this afternoon I found about a half dozen cigarette stubs lying around and more than that many burnt matches. They were fresh ones and were put there since I left home. Are you real sure Leroy Morrison was not here?"

Marcel began to see how difficult the road of deception promised to be, but being sure of herself in this one particular, she looked Mrs. Proudfoot in the face and truthfully said, "Mrs. Proudfoot, Leroy Morrison did not come here with me, and if he has been here since you left I do not know it and have no idea at all who smoked cigarettes in your yard."

"It makes no difference," answered Mrs. Proudfoot. "I suppose some boys were running around here Sunday afternoon and did it. It makes no difference."

So that suspicion was apparently quelled and Macel's mind set at rest somewhat, and it may be just as well that she could not foresee that in almost every home in the neighborhood the matter would be mentioned during the next few days, that the teacher had come from the Proudfoot home alone that morning; and that George Shaw had found her there alone getting her own breakfast when he went early in the morning to milk the cows and feed the pigs for Mrs. Proudfoot, and that she had told him that she had spent the night there. Neither did she know that Mrs. Proudfoot would tell all the neighbors about the half smoked cigarettes, or that she would accuse at least half the young

men she saw during the next month of being in her yard during her absence and throwing cigarette stubs and burnt matches all over it.

In two short weeks Macel Adams had stood on the Mount of Expectations and in perfect confidence had viewed the future without a faltering fear; had been jerked rudely from her perch and dragged roughly through the Valley of Humiliation, and dirty and besmirched, had been rudely placed upon the stool of public inquisition surrounded by scowling faces and slanderous tongues. Such is life, however, but it is unfortunate that it is more often the innocent than the guilty who suffer.

John Scott had happened to be riding through Altoona soon after dark on Sunday evening of the fight on the railroad track, and seeing a light in Dr. Johnson's office, stopped to chat awhile with him. John was much interested in medicine and he and the doctor were great friends, and often their discussions were prolonged, as it was on this particular night, until very late. As it neared midnight John arose and said to the doctor, "Well Doctor, this social problem we have been discussing is getting to be a serious one. While in Charleston recently I heard Dr. Dixon preach a sermon on

it at the Methodist Church. He claimed, and I believe proved, that it is the most important issue before America today. I had not thought so much of it, but lately I have been noticing things around here and it seems to me that we people of the mountains are going to have more of it since the railroad came and public works are springing up all around us."

"You are right," said the doctor. "You have no idea of the number of cases of venereal disease I have right now, and most of them came from the Opera House here; something ought to be done to put that place out of business."

Soon John took his leave of the doctor and started for home, but had not gone far before he came in sight of and passed close to the five men and two women who had recently left the hotel. He would have paid scant notice to them, however, had he not observed that one of the women was protesting against going further, and by riding along slowly, soon discovered who the women were. Riding along behind them, he soon came to the point where the railroad entered the woods. At first he had no thought of following further, but seeing that the girl was apparently moving along under

protest and might even need protection, he, after some hesitation, hitched his horse and followed slowly up the railroad track, but after hearing the shots and screams, hurried rapidly on to where he saw Macel fall.

Dr. Johnson had just retired for the night when some one knocked at the door.

"Get your clothes on quick, Doctor, we have had a fight up the road and some men are badly hurt," one of the men at the door said. "We will wait for you, but get plenty of bandages, cotton and plaster, you will need them."

"All right," said the doctor, "I will be ready in a few minutes." When he came out, the doctor informed them that he had let his supply of bandages and absorbent cotton become entirely exhausted, but that if it was absolutely necessary to have them, he might get Mr. Fizsimmons out of bed and procure something that would answer the purpose.

The men then led him down near the depot and standing in the shadows, drew revolvers from their pockets, saying, "Doctor, we need your help and do not want to cause you any trouble, but we have had a fight up the road, one man is dead, two others are badly hurt and need attention. Now you go and get Mr. Fitz-

simmons out of bed and get anything you may need, but do not tell him anything about what it is for. Then come back and we will take you to the place. After looking after the men we will bring you back, but after that you must remember to forget it, otherwise you will be killed. Do you understand?''

''Yes, I understand,'' answered the doctor.

''We will wait right here for you,'' said one of the men.

The doctor went to Mr. Fitzsimmons' house and called him out telling him he wanted some stuff from the store and could not wait till morning. While complying with the doctor's quest the merchant asked several questions which the doctor evaded, but finally when leaving the store he said, ''Mr. Fitzsimmons, please say nothing about this.''

''Oh! All right,'' answered the merchant, and he kept his word except that he told his wife, cautioning her to say nothing about it. It was with the same precaution that Mrs. Fitzsimmons told Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Brown told her husband and so on, until by the middle of the week every one in Altoona knew at least as much as Mrs. Fizsimmons could tell.

When the doctor returned to the men near

the depot he was blindfolded and led by public road and railroad track to the place where the dead and wounded men lay. The man that was dead needed no attention, but after removing the handkerchief from his eyes they ordered the doctor to look after the other men. This took some time for he did it thoroughly, finally saying, "That is all I can do, boys, it will take a good while for them to get well, but they will be all right in a few months."

The doctor was again blindfolded and led back to the village and the blindfold again removed. The man who seemed to do most of the talking asked what the doctor charged.

"I don't know," answered Dr. Johnson, "but a job like this ought to be worth a pretty good price."

He was then handed a twenty dollar bill and the man again displaying his revolver, said in a tense and theatening tone, "Now, Doc, we have paid you for what you have done. We have treated you right. It is now up to you to forget it. If you do, there will be no trouble, but if you know any of us or have recognized the place we have taken you and ever tell anything, we will see that you get yours. Now hold up your right hand and say, 'I will never tell'."

His hand went up, "I will never tell," repeated the doctor. And although he was questioned probably a thousand times concerning it and finally summoned before the Grand Jury, Dr. Johnson never told anything more than was already common neighborhood knowledge.

To those who may be curious as to the disposal of the dead man and the ultimate fate of the wounded, we will explain that Mrs. Coon had a bad knife wound in the thigh which kept her in her room about six weeks. It is also fair to say that this wound was entirely accidental, being received in her attempt to separate the men. The dead man was buried in the sawdust and a friend who lived not far away was called out, and bringing a wagon, hauled the wounded men to his home where they were nursed secretly until they recovered sufficiently to leave the county. Some weeks afterward one of them was seen in Pocahontas County with his arm still in a sling. The other was not heard of for several years until an acquaintance recognized him as camp cook for a lumber company on Green Mountain in Tucker County.

The two uninjured men went back to their work and so far as we know, took to themselves the advice they had given Dr. Johnson, and

got it", except to return the next night and remove the body of the dead man from the sawdust pile.

The track walker for the railroad on the following morning had found a puddle of blood on the cross ties where the tragedy had occurred, and reported it. This information added to the story of Mr. and Mrs. Fitzsimmons, led to an investigation by curious citizens, but nothing more was discovered except a hole in the sawdust pile where the body had been temporarily buried.

The name of the dead man has never been discovered. All that is known is that a certain man who worked for a certain lumber company disappeared that day, and his undrawn wages have never been called for.

Some weeks after the fight a man walking along the railroad track saw something in the sandy bottom across the river that looked like a mound of new earth thrown up. Having heard of the probable murder and knowing that a man had disappeared, he told what he had seen to others who went to investigate. They found what looked like it might be a grave, but it did not appear to be long enough for a human body, yet since it would be natural for those in

haste to double a body up and crowd it into as small a hole as possible, it was considered likely that the dead man was buried there.

There seemed to be none willing to open the grave. Some thought it should be done by officers of the law. Finally, a man named Phillips went for a shovel and soon threw away the dirt down to a distance of two or three feet when a part of a coat was visible. It was a tense moment for those who looked on, but further digging only brought out an old coat wrapped around a chunk of wood. The coat was never identified. All else remain a mystery.

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Chapter VII

Time and Tide

"Buckwheat cakes and pumpkin pie
Must the girl who marries I
Make a pudding, darn a stocking,
At the same time keep a cradle rocking."

* * * * *

The first two years after John Scott's return to the mountains after having graduated from the normal school were spent in laying the foundation of his future activities and power.

He had already become a member of the church, and had joined most of the secret and fraternal organizations of the nearby villages. He at once became definitely identified with the county and state organizations of his political party, and attended all public meetings held anywhere within reach and was often called upon to speak. He was also very active in scientific farm improvement and soon came to be looked upon by the mountain farmers as a reliable authority on almost every subject. He bought, sold and traded in cattle, lumber and tanbark, and while by no means getting rich, was making money rapidly.

During this time Fred Brown continued to work on the saw mill and Miska gave birth to another girl baby. John often visited them and sat for many a night until very late advising Fred and Miska as to their future. Finally coming to the conclusion that Fred was destined to always remain "a drawer of water and a hewer of wood" and Miska to remain a sort of double jointed machine for baking bread, darning stockings and rocking cradles, John went to Fred with a proposition through which he hoped to help them. John said, "Fred, you know the 'old Herndon place', well, I have

bought it. The buildings are about gone and the cleared land grown up, but there are nearly three hundred acres of land and every foot of it good rich soil. It will make a fine farm when once cleared and fixed up. All the woods part is covered by very fine timber and I have bought the whole thing for what I consider less than the timber is actually worth. Now if I wanted the makings of a real farm home anywhere here, I would want to keep the land, but I do not. What I do want is to work the timber, and would like to take you into partnership."

"But I don't have any money," said Fred. "It will take a lot of money to handle a job like that."

"I know," answered John, "it will take some money, but I think I can manage that. The land and timber is bought and paid for and I have a little money left. It will not cost so much as you think to run the job. We will contract with some man who owns a mill to do the sawing, hire some one else with teams to do the hauling; some of the work we will look after ourselves, but most of it will be done by contract. My proposition is this: I will finance the operation, will see that we get the money to

start, after that we can get advances on the lumber sold. You, Fred, will look after and superintend the production end of the job. The first clear money we make will go to pay back the money I have paid for the land, then when it is all done and finished we will divide the profits fifty-fifty."

And so the matter was settled. Contracts were soon made and the 'old Herndon' woods became a hive of activity, and the camp of Scott & Brown become known to all the surrounding country as a good place to work or sell produce. Numerous shanties for the working men were built and a small store room constructed where groceries and men's supplies were kept for sale. A cheap boarding house was also built where Miska reigned supreme.

When the job was finally finished and the last board sold, John, Fred and Miska, who held in her arms the third little girl baby, gathered around the kitchen table of the boarding house to "settle up".

"How do you suppose we are going to come out?" asked John.

"Oh! I don't know," answered Fred, "we have made some money I know, but you have kept the accounts, John, and know more about it than I do."

"Here are the books, Fred," and John spread them all open. "They show that I have been paid by the earnings of the firm for my land, and what is left is partnership property. All debts are paid, and when a few outstanding bills are collected we will have nearly fifteen thousand dollars in the bank. Half the land and half of this money, Fred belongs to you and Miska." When John said this, Miska almost dropped the baby. She knew, of course, that they were making some money but had no idea it was so much.

"Well, John," said Fred, "I do not want to go into another lumber job, it's too hard on Miska, so I will tell you what I am willing to do. If you will let me take the land and what is left on it in the way of lumber, shanties, etc. you may have the money. I will clear up the farm and Miska and I will live here. It will make a good home, a lot better than I ever hoped to own or could have owned, John, if it had not been for you."

"No, we can't divide that way," answered John Scott. "We are equal partners, you and Miska have worked here like slaves almost day and night, and while it is true my money was backing us in the start, I have given the job a

small part of my time and personal attention. We can sell the farm including oil and gas rights for five thousand dollars. If you want to keep it at that price, all right, but the rest of the money which will be about ten thousand, we will divide. Your part will enable you to build a comfortable house and outbuildings, clear away the lumber yards, buy some stock and still have some money left." Fred and Miska argued that it was more than was coming to them but finally it was settled that way and the partnership dissolved.

That night after the children were asleep, Fred and Miska Brown sat for a long time before the fire discussing their future which looked very bright. Finally Fred said, "Miska, I think we ought to thank the Lord for our good fortune," and bowing on their knees before their new family altar, they together thanked God for health and happiness, for each other, for their beautiful children and for a friend like John Scott.

The timber venture had in its earlier months taxed John's financial resources almost to the breaking point, but he had done what he set out to do; he had helped Fred and Miska in providing a home and getting a start in life, but in

doing it he had laid for himself the foundation of a considerable fortune which increased as the years passed by. He was always up early and day by day might be seen on horseback riding the country, and late at night when the hoof beats of a horse reached the ears of some farmer or his family it was generally said, "There goes John Scott." But his happiest hours were spent with Fred and Miska where he had his own stall in the new barn and his own bed in the new house.

After Miska's fifth girl baby was born, John said one day, "Look here, Fred, this baby business has got to stop. There is getting to be too many girls around here for Miska to look after," but Miska put her finger on his mouth and reminded him, "Why, John, don't you remember that we were to have five little girls and one little boy?"

"Oh! yes," said John, "I remember that all right, but I'm talking to Fred now. I didn't know then that he was going to come butting in on it." Then they all laughed and John told them to have twenty if they wanted them, but that John Jr. seemed to be waiting for a very late train.

It was not long after this that the terrible blow fell. Fred, who had been complaining for

several days, became very much worse and Dr. Johnson when he arrived said he had typhoid. John Scott came soon and stayed all night but was hardly prepared to find Fred so bad. When he left he took all the children in his arms and told them they must play out doors most of the time and be very quiet, and to Miska he said, "Girlie, we are up against a hard fight. Fred is getting worse all the time. I will arrange things and be back tomorrow to stay."

And so it was John Scott that watched beside Fred Brown for many sleepless nights, his voice that soothed him through many restless slumbers and quieted him in his almost constant delirium, and his hand that wiped the death dew from his brow and summoned the heartbroken family in the last moment.

It was John Scott that led the grief stricken widow and orphans back to a deserted and broken home, and it was John Scott who settled up Fred's business and advised Miska about the investment of the insurance money. Fred with his last strength had said, "I am not afraid to die, Miska, John will always care for you and the children."

The responsibility had been accepted and fulfilled to the best of John's ability and now

after three years, he began to wonder just how he would end it. He had spent much time with Miska and the children who had come to love him very much and call him "Daddy Johnsy". The neighbors had never misconstrued his intimacy with the family, and no word of slander was ever spoken. This was largely due to the fact that John and Miska were regarded almost as brother and sister, and further because Fred Brown had with his last breath consigned his family to John's care. Besides, John Scott was the type of man with whom mothers could trust their daughters. It is also a curious fact that for miles around no one ever referred to Miska as "The Widow Brown." She was usually referred to simply as Miska, or sometimes as "Mrs Brown".

Miska was not yet thirty years old when our story opens and had developed into a very beautiful little matron. There was something about her that always made people wonder. Grace and appropriate action seemed only natural to her. Squire Baily said that if Miska Brown were presented at the English Court, she would know just what to say and exactly how to act without being told. This almost expressed the truth, for Miska Brown, though born nobody

knew where, of parents no one had ever seen, was plainly a lady bred and born.

It is not known whether John Scott had ever thought of Miska as his wife or not. It could not be known, because he did not know himself, but for some reason when he looked at her he had a feeling of wonder.

But time and tide wait for no man, and as John Scott reached his thirty-fifth year it must be confessed that he began to wonder if there would ever be any John Junior for him, and it is more than likely that he had thought of more than one mountain girl in terms of motherhood. It may have been Macel Adams, but "I wonder".

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Chapter VIII

The Opera House

"Immodest words admit of no defense,
For want of decency is lack of sense."

* * * * *

Much has been said and written about the evils of society. Some maintain that the social evil is a necessary one; as though there could be any necessity for an evil at all. It is very

true that it is an inherent animal instinct for men and women to seek the company of each other. The Creator of man was first to realize this and give Adam his helpmate in the Garden of Eden.

The young people of the mountains felt this call of sex to sex and usually interpreted it as the growing desire to mate, as their cave dwelling ancestors had done a million years before.

The red cheeked mountain lass in her home-made dress of linsey-woolsey and cowhide shoes could smile just as sweetly upon her husky lover when he came to her party from some neighboring farm, still dressed in his brogans and overalls, as in his Sunday best; and the call of heart to heart was indeed the call of nature, and not the curiosity of a distorted mind to find the color of the skin beneath the paint, or to break the ice of morality and test the depth and quality of the liquid below. Chivalry among the mountains may have been crudely expressed, but under its rough exterior diamonds of a thousand carats blazed and sparkled. Unfortunately for youth, the old days of log rollings, bean stringings, and apple peelings were the social events of a passing generation, and the serpent which had boldly walked into the cradle

of the world and bred the first unrest, now through centuries of enforced humility, cautious but still unchastened, was worming its way into the mountains under the deceptive name of progress.

John Scott who had walked the smooth streets of cities, and looked behind the curtain of what should have been forbidden fruit, recognized the symptoms of impending social disorder, and feared for what might be the result. Young men from the outside world were flocking to the mountains and with stylish clothes, and an experience gleaned from other fields of conquest, were making fast, furious and sometimes ruinous seige to the hearts of many mountain girls. Shorter hours of labor, more pay, and a determination to hold their own, led many of the boys of the hills into an imitation of the new comers; soon transforming the placid rustic life of one generation into the more exciting but less innocent occurrences of the next.

It was as a part of this evolution that the Opera House was born. Had the women themselves been induced to give a reason for its existence, the answers would doubtless have been as various as they were obsolete. One may have said, "He tempted me and I fell." An-

other, "I needed money for nice clothes." While a third would have answered, "I wanted a good time." So Leroy Morrison, whose imagination was brightened and whetted into an uncontrollable curiosity by the stories of other young men who gathered around the stove in Mr, Fitzsimmons' store after other customers had left and Mr. Fitzsimmons himself was in bed, thought more and more of the pleasures of the Opera House.

Nor was a direct invitation lacking, for one of the girls, while making a purchase, had whispered to him, "Why don't you come up some night?" And he had answered in a low tone, "I'm afraid some one will see me come in." "Come in at the kitchen door," she had said. And when Leroy finally found his way to the kitchen door of the Opera House and entered, it was with a feeling of considerable shame for he had many of the elements of respectability left; and without the temptation so brazenly displayed, he might not have fallen. He found the associations there somewhat attractive. The music, while very poor, was music nevertheless. He was petted, coddled and made love to. They sang, danced and played games. Convention

was a lost art, and language entirely a matter of choice of words.

Ida, the youngest girl, made a special effort to captivate Leroy, and succeeded in doing so to the extent of capturing about all the money he could spare and even half convincing him that she was in love with him. She begged him to take her away and fervently declared her fidelity to him for life; and tried to prove her virtuous declarations by refusing the advances of any one else, at least while in his presence. Like the 'fool that was', he half believed her and might have been led deeper into the mire of disgrace had it not been for a lucky display of the girl's true character.

Billy Williams, an old drunken laborer of the mills, had come to Altoona one night, and after getting a little drunker, and if possible more disgustingly dirty than common, purchased a jug full of whiskey at a speak-easy, and started down the railroad track with it. It soon became a burden, and he found it easier to roll the jug along by an occasional kick. This soon landed them both against the Opera House door, where Billy continued to kick and curse until he was admitted, still kicking the jug which rolled across the floor. Ida was playing the organ when he came in, but stopped at once.

Old Billy was dirty from the top of his head

to the bottom of his feet. His eyes were bloodshot and watery; tobacco juice and saliva trickled from his mouth almost in a crimson stream.

"Go on playin'," he begged. "Play 'Home Sweet Home' and sing it like my sister used to." Ida refused scornfully and Old Billy streached out his arms "Oh! play 'Home Sweet Home', and sing it for me like my sister used to," he repeated with drunken tears in his eyes. Then seeing that she made no move to comply, he put his hand into his pocket and finding a silver dollar, offered it to her saying, "Here's a dollar, won't you play it?" The girl took the dollar and rapidly ran her fingers over the chords of the song and then stopped, but Billy was not satisfied. "I gave you a dollar," he pleaded, "I want you to sing it like my poor, dead sister used to." But Ida had left the organ and was dancing across the room towards Leroy who began to sing, "My Daddy and Mammy were Irish".

"If you won't play, then dance with me, won't you?" begged Billy, as he staggered across the floor toward her, but seeing no encouragement in her face, he fished another silver dollar from his pocket and offered it to her. She took the dollar and dropped it into her

pocket, and looking at one of her sisters, nodded towards the jug, grabbed Billy by the shoulders and danced around the room, Leroy singing and beating time to the music of—

"My daddy and mammy were Irish.
My daddy and mammy were Irish,
My daddy and mammy were Irish,
And I am Irish too."

By this time the other girl had returned from the kitchen where the jug had been almost emptied of its contents into a convenient bucket, and putting the jug on the floor, she gave it a kick which sent it between Billy's feet, completely upsetting him. He sprawled upon the floor and hugged the jug for a moment, and then began to cry and blubber like a big boy whose ears had been boxed by an irate mother. "Oh! I'm goin', I'm goin'," he cried, and getting to his feet, begged "Ida, won't you kiss me goodbye like my dear dead sister used to?"

"Got any more money?" asked the girl.

"Just one lil' ole dollar left," he answered, after searching his pockets.

"I'll kiss you for the dollar," she answered, reaching for the money.

Old Billy held it back. "Kiss me first," he begged.

The girl, seeing that he had acquired some drunken wisdom and probably thinking it the easiest way to end the argument and get the money, kissed him on his filthy mouth, and then opening the door, kicked the jug outside and pushed Old Billy after it. A few minutes later, a great howl went up from Old Billy. He had tried to take a drink from the jug and found it almost empty.

"You have stole my liquor," he cried, hammering at the door.

"Go out and take that old drunken devil away from here, Leroy," Ida ordered.

Taking his hat, Leroy slipped out through the kitchen door and soon had Old Billy and his empty jug safely out of hearing and reach of the Opera House.

Leroy did not return to his frivolous companions that night. After leaving the drunken old man in Andy Foster's barn, he went to his own room where he sat for a long time before retiring. The treatment of the old drunkard had been too much for him. He knew Old Billy to be an honest, hardworking man, whose greatest fault was his thirst for liquor. He had seen his first dollar taken by a promise to play and sing, which was not fulfilled ;he had seen an-

other one taken in return for a few dancing steps done while the whiskey was being stolen from the jug; and then the lips that he himself had tasted and thought so sweet just a few moments before, did not hesitate to suck the foul juice from Old Billy's mouth, in consideration of the last dollar the old man had; after which both he and his empty jug had been kicked out of the house.

The night was cold and rapidly getting colder, and had not Leroy in obeying an imperative demand to take him away, placed him in a comfortable bed of hay in Andy Foster's barn, Old Billy might have lain out there and frozen before morning.

Leroy Morrison had precious little of the milk of human kindness about him, and probably less of what might be called moral sense, but he did have some ideas of decency; and while he might secretly filch money from the store of Mr. Fitzsimmons, he could not approve the open robbery of an old drunken man. And then the girl who had made love to him and whose touch was so tender, whose lips were so sweet—she had done this, and in doing it had displayed all the coarseness of a debased nature, and in the end had looked like a fiend.

He had enjoyed the honeyed caresses of this house of discarded virtue and in its dim and curtained recesses had imagined that Venus was a beautiful goddess. But her reign had been brief, and Leroy was yet to face the stern image of Mercury which exacts his painful years of service for every fleeting moment of pleasure.

Steel rails and copper wires had penetrated the mountains of West Virginia and connected them with the valleys far away; but they had done more, they had carried with them the stench of a social disorder that was striking at the very fountain of human life, and threatening the manhood and womanhood of the whole land.

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Chapter IX

The Fiddler Collects His Pay

"You would have come to greatness too,
Had you but willed great deeds to do."

* * * * *

Leroy Morrison, the "other man" in this story, was standing in Dr. Johnson's private office; it was at night and the time was just before the Christmas holidays.

"Say, Doc, I've got to have something; this standing on my feet all day and then till nearly midnight in that store is just about killing me. Can't you give me something better?"

"Sit down," said the doctor, "Let's have some talk. I knew when you came to this town and got to fooling around that Opera House that you would get into trouble. I knew that sooner or later you would be looking for a doctor. Lots of boys around here go to some other physician because they don't want me to know they are infected, but most of them come to me in the end. Now this trouble you have is generally supposed to be 'no worse than a cold' but take it from me, and I know, it is one of the most dangerous diseases a man can get. I have given you the best treatment there is but as long as you continue to work, and drink that 'rot gut' whiskey, you are not going to get well. Besides, I am not sure that you have stopped going to the 'Opera House'."

"I have only been there two or three times lately, Doc, and then only just to see the fun, but there's not much fun in it the way I have been feeling."

"Well" said the doctor, "if you could get out of work for a couple of weeks and take it easy

and do as I tell you, I could fix you up pretty well in that time."

"But that's just it, Doc, Mr. Fitzsimmons can't do without me now. The next two weeks will be his busy time, and if I leave him now he will be mad. Besides, what excuse would I have?"

The doctor pondered awhile and then said, "Why not go home over Sunday and then get sick and send him word you are not able to come back?"

"It won't do," answered Leroy, "the folks at home would catch on and besides, there are enough fellows around here that know what I've got, so it would soon get out. Besides, Doc, I don't want Macel Adams to know about this, it would fix my clock with her for good and all. The Lord knows if I get out of this scrape I will behave myself."

"Yes," answered Dr. Johnson with a grin, "I have been hearing the boys talk that way ever since I commenced to doctor them, but they all forget it."

"But gee whiz, Doctor, what is a fellow going to do?"

"I'll tell you what," said the doctor looking at him sternly, "you young fellows think you

can rip around with any kind of girl no matter who or what she is. A self-respecting dog would shy at the kind of girls you have been running with. You drink rotten whiskey and gamble; make fun of decent people, and as soon as you are sober and get on a clean shirt and a smile, you think you are fit to go into the best of company, and court, and if possible, ruin what few nice girls we have left. Do you know what I think? Well, I'll tell you. I think that every damned one of you ought to be advertised as a menace to the community and those of you who are diseased ought to be put into pest houses and kept there till cured. And Macel Adams, you don't want her to know but you do want to go on courting her, taking her clean hands in your dirty ones, kiss her clean lips with the Opera House filth still on your own. You don't want her to know. You want her to be pure and clean and sweet, while you sow "your wild oats". You wouldn't want to marry an Opera House girl, oh no, but Macel Adams or some other clean girl to whom you may transmit your diseases and then have her bring to you children who are blind and crippled."

This was a rather long speech for the doctor,

and when he stopped Leroy had arisen from his seat and appeared very angry, but after a moment, said. "I know, Doctor, you are perfectly right. I know it just as well as you do, but for Heaven's sake don't blame it all on me."

"I'm not blaming it all on you," answered the doctor, "I am speaking on general principles and as a citizen of the community. As a physician, it is my business to dispense medical aid, and of course, keep my mouth shut about it. But as a physician, I hope the time will come when this class of disease will be controlled by law."

Leroy smiled, but finally said, "Now, Doctor, you have gotten your sermon out of your system. Let's get back to the text, which I believe is, "What the devil am I going to do?"

Dr. Johnson then gave him some very explicit instruction as to diet, drink and personal hygiene; also some medicine which he directed to be used faithfully and carefully, and told him what he might and might not do. "It may be," said the Doctor, "that we can work along with you this way till the busy season is over and then we will have a better chance."

"All right, said Leroy, "I will see you again, but I'll have to eat a big dinner on Christmas

for I have promised to spend Christmas day with Macel and I will be at Samuel Adams' that day."

"There is just one more direction that goes wtih this treatment," said the doctor, "one other thing if you expect me to look after you, and that one thing is, you are not to eat Christmas dinner at Samuel Adams, in fact, you are not to visit the Adams at all that day."

Leroy looked aghast and mystified.

"Make whatever excuse you can or please, but that one thing I forbid. You are to stay away from Sang Sun on Christmas day. Figure it out any way you please. I am a married man you know, and I have some regard for the Adams family, and if Macel had more horse sense and not so much good looks, it would be better for her."

Leroy stood some minutes in silence, finally he said, "Well, Doc, you have given me some pretty hot stuff tonight, but I deserve it I guess. After the dance, the fiddler must be paid you know. I think I can manage it so that I will eat Christmas dinner at home."

"And," added the doctor, "be so dog tired that you lie around in bed most of the day."

The doctor watched Leroy Morrison until he

was completely out of sight, then closing the door, he sat down at his desk in deep thought. He was a very competent and painstaking physician who had spent many years of his life among the mountain people. His yellow mule and saddle bags had almost become a trade mark of the medical profession among them. There were very few homes at which he had not officiated at the birth of a "future president". In fact, a considerable number of them were named after him. He had been there also many times when the "winged Angel" hovered near, but was never known to give up to that unwelcome visitor, always fighting to the last ditch, bringing into play the last thing in medical science, and when at last he found himself the loser in the battle for human life, he with his good wife were always to be found with the grief stricken family at the funeral.

It is unfortunate that God did not make more men like this good doctor, but it may be that the material was not at hand. This observation is made with all due reverence and only because such men as he were lamentably scare and hard to find.

The doctor had heard some whisperings which were not to the credit of Macel Adams,

but he did not believe them. He did think her somewhat vain and possibly lacking in discretion, but she was very young and inexperienced, and no doubt was making as hard a fight for her womanhood as was possible under the circumstances. He also knew the character of most of the young men who had come into the mountain country with the building of the railroad and lumber camps, and while many of them were fine, straighforward fellows, some of them were very bad, and would likely bring ruin and disgrace upon any young girl who permitted their company. Leroy Morrison was a mountain boy himself, coming from an adjoining district, and being handsome and rather quickwitted, had soon become a favorite among his friends. He dressed well and had had more than the ordinary educational opportunities. He very quickly capitalized these advantages for all they were worth, and being naturally lazy and inherently a schemer, he soon felt himself too good for ordinary labor and sought a clerkship in the store where he could use his personal charms to the best advantage and work without soiling his clothes. He also soon found it convenient to "knock down" a few dollars from his employer.

Macel Adams was somewhat flattered by Leroy's attentions which, to do him justice, were really sincere. She was a very beautiful girl, highly intelligent and according to mountain standards, was well educated. Indeed, she was a woman whom with proper training might, with opportunity, grace well a governor's mansion. Leroy realized this and without thought of her happiness or welfare, had about made up his selfish mind to possess her. It was probably lust for her untarnished body rather than real love that impelled him.

The morning after his interview with Dr. Johnson, Leroy watched for Macel on her way to school and was standing on the store platform as she passed. Walking a short distance with her, he said, "Macel, I am afraid I cannot spend Christmas with you as we had planned. I got word from home last night and they are expecting me to be there. I am mighty sorry but I guess I will have to go, but I will think of you all day."

"Oh! that's all right, Leroy," answered Macel. "Sorry you have other company to serve, but we will have plenty of company of our own. I do not expect to be lonesome."

"Now, Macel, don't think I have any other

girl. There is no girl living that could keep me away from you, and if you let some of these hill-billies cut me out, I'll just come over on Sang Run and clean up on them."

"Oh, don't worry, Leroy," answered the girl, "Go home and enjoy yourself. I am no man's property yet but if you would rather be with someone else Saturday and Sunday, of course, it's up to you."

"It's not 'up to me', Macel, I can't help it. I just can't get out of being at home Chrismas day."

"All right," said Macel, "When the cat's away the mice will play, you know, and if you are lonesome here when you come back Sunday, of course, there is always the 'Opera House'."

With this parting shot Macel left him and went on to the school house and Leroy returnel to the store. Her reference to the Opera House had annoyed him and he wondered if she knew or had heard anything of his visits there. He had been very cautious and had felt sure she did not know of them.

And so it came to pass that as Leroy Morrison spent the first Christmas for several years with his parents, John Scott was found eating Christmas turkey with the family of Samuel Adams.

John Scott, who had never gone courting since the fair haired girl years before had jilted him for an older man with "greater expectations", but now a mature man of the world who had made money but had planned and worked hard for it, but in doing so had lost none of the illustions of youth. And he still believed in God and kept the Sabbath day holy.

It was well that Leroy Morrison did not know of John Scott's whereabouts that day. Dr. Johnson's advice would doubtless have been forgotten.

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Chapter X

John Enters Society

"Beyond the gray clouds which at times hover low,
There are sunshine and beauty which we shall know."

* * * * *

Christmas came on Saturday this particular year. A deep snow had fallen, and sleighs, sleds and "go-devils" were jingling their merry way almost everywhere. On the Thursday evening just preceding, there was a box supper

at one of the district school houses near Altoona and John Scott was present and succeeded in identifying Macel Adams' box and purchasing it. He had had no opportunity to talk with Macel since the memorable night of the tragedy on the railroad track and he was anxious to know how she had come out of it. He had heard some rumors concerning the fight but nothing that connected her in any way with it; so he had gone to the box supper early and seated himself well up in front where he could observe the boxes as they were deposited on the table by the girls as they came in.

Those who have attended a "box" or peanut" supper at some country school house know of the chattering social time which follows the distribution of boxes. Each purchaser of a box finds the girl who put it up and they eat the contents together. John soon found Macel and informed her that he was the lucky man that night, and proposed a corner of the room for the feast where they would be least disturbed. It was not hard to talk without being overheard, as the next hour was one of jests, jokes, good natured raillery and loud laughter, followed by a fusilade of piecrusts, apple cores and box lids, as the crowd broke up and the

young folks paired off for the journey to their homes.

John was a good conversationalist and fifteen or twenty minutes were spent very pleasantly in impersonal talk. Macel seemed perfectly at ease and full of happiness and health. She wore a little fur cap or hat with a single red feather stuck in the side. At times she bantered those across the room with some witty pleasantry. When she spoke low to John her voice was well modulated and musical. Her slightly rimmed, heavily fringed gray eyes were bright and sparkling, but constantly changing with the almost constant change of her moods, always expressive but always provocative. John Scott had met and conversed with many girls, some of whom at least, had openly "set their caps" for him, but that night Macel affected him differently from any he had ever seen and the vivid contrast of her coloring, red lips against a skin which, while very fair, was just freckled enough to make it look intensely alive and human. Laughing gray eyes against dark lashes, and straight brown brows struck him with a new sense of pleasurable novelty every time he looked at her. She had a striking figure too, neither small nor slender, but roundly developed and graceful and full of sturdy health.

Had John been a younger man, the beauty of Macel Adams would have swept him off his feet and he might have made something of a fool of himself, but he had studied in a hard school and learned well the lessons of equations. He knew also that "all is not gold that glitters" and things are sometimes not what they seem.

Finally Macel said, "Mr. Scott, you had better come over and visit our school tomorrow afternoon. I am going to treat. How would you like to play Santa Claus?"

"Oh! My," answered John, "Do I look so ancient? I am afraid my whiskers won't grow fast enough for that."

"Well, come anyway," said Macel. "We are going to have a little Christmas program in the afternoon and then treat the school and all go home until Monday. That is, I suppose we will all go home. I don't know how I am going to get to Sang Run. I will have to telephone for Dad to come with a 'Yankee Jumper', I guess."

The crowd had begun to scatter and John saw that the opportunity to talk to Macel alone had passed, in fact, there had been no such opportunity at all.

"Well, I'll tell you what I'll do, Macel. I

will come to Altoona in my sleigh tomorrow afternoon and come to your Christmas program and then I'll drive you home. What do you say to that?"

"All right," answered Macel, "do that, but if you go to that much trouble, you have to promise one thing more?"

"What's that?" asked John.

"You are to stay till after dinner Christmas. Dad has the biggest turkey to kill. Oh! it will weigh about one hundred pounds, I guess, and we will want help to eat it."

"Oh, it isn't a hundred pounder, is it?" asked John.

"Mighty near it," answered Macel. "Mother says she will have to roast one side at a time for there's no stove in the county big enough to get it into."

"I will be on hand," said John, "tomorrow afternoon, and if I can help any with the turkey, I am perfectly willing to try, but don't count on me for Santa Claus. I feel too young for that."

So they separated in the school house yard; Macel to pile on a sled with about a dozen other boys and girls with whom she had come from the village, and John to mount his horse and ride to his home several miles away.

If Dan Cupid was anywhere about the mountains that night he might or might not have been satisfied with his work. John Scott was plainly fascinated. He had come to the box supper only thinking it might afford an opportunity to speak semi-privately with Macel, or at least get some word or expression that would satisfy his curiosity as to her feeling of their last meeting. He was leaving without having learned anything, except that she was a very lovely girl, full of life, brimming over with health, and much smarter than he had calculated. He also decided that she was something of a flirt or might develop into a dangerous one. In fact, she appeared to be of the type which Squire Baily classified as "if you catch them at all, you have got to get 'em young," and John Scott could plainly see that with two or three more years of physical and mental development, Macel Adams might grow into a woman who could get anything she wanted, but would not be easily satisfied. The dart had struck John's heart and made an impression, but had not penetrated. And he rode home that night in such deep thought that he reached his own gate scarcely recognizing it.

Not so much could be said for Macel. It is

true she was somewhat surprised at this meeting with John, and the arrangement made for him to accompany her home and remain for dinner Christmas day. She knew her parents would be surprised for she had informed them that Leroy Morrison would come over on Christmas. It would, therefore, be necessary for her to make some explanation.

Macel rather believed herself in love with Leroy, and was very much disappointed at his failure to keep his promise for Christmas and thought it might make him more eager for her company or at least appreciate it more if she showed him how easy it was for her to "catch another beau." And John Scott, a man of considerable wealth, who was looked up to and respected by every one, a man who was held up as a model by mothers to their sons and as a prize to their daughters. Could she, Macel Adams, not consider herself lucky indeed? But while Macel could not help but respect and admire him and could not deny that she had thought much of him, she could detect no quiver in her heart at the thought,—not yet.

On Friday afternoon, John Scott, properly dressed for the occasion, drove his sleigh into Altoona and after purchasing a variety of can-

dies at Fitzsimmons' store, repaired to the school house where he found the whole of the school assembled and the literary program in full blast.

After the exercise was completed, Macel said, "Now, children, we have an old teacher of yours with us this evening whom I am sure you would like to hear. Mr. Scott, won't you give us a little talk?"

John Scott's little talk to the children cannot be quoted here, but he was a master of rhetoric and knew how to play upon the feelings and imagination of the children. Besides, he wanted to make an impression on the teacher. He probably would not have admitted this even to himself, but it was true nevertheless. He kept the children laughing and crying alternately with his fun and ridiculous stories for ten minutes and then, giving them some sage advice, sat down.

"It is now fifteen minutes until time for Santa Claus. What will we do during that time?" asked the teacher.

Two or three suggested a query box. "All right," said Macel, "we will have a query box but only with one dozen queries. Write them quickly and I will take them up and read them."

For a moment every one was busy writing or whispering, and then the slips of paper containing the questions, having been deposited in an empty chalk box, Macel commenced to read them.

The first one was characteristic of the boys for it read "Where is the United States Navy?"

"In Job Proudfoot's pocket, he chaws it," answered Bill Tenney in a loud voice. This was followed by much clapping of hands and loud laughter.

The next query read: "What is a woman?"

"A two legged animal that paints her face and has a pain in her back," answered Sterling Loudin. More laughing and handclapping by the masculine side of the house.

The next query was not read by Macel. Instead, she rolled it up and put it into the stove. Had she read this query, it would have been as follows: "Why is teacher so sad today?" Answer: "Because Leroy Morrison has gone home." "Why is the teacher so glad today?" Answer: "Because John Scott is here in his place."

She glanced toward Art Young who was the largest boy in the school and blushed. She rec-

ognized Art's writing and knew he was at the box supper the night before and knew that John had bought her box and they had eaten it together.

"We will not have any more queries now," said Macel. "I am going to ask Panzy Chapman to recite her latest original poem. I think by that time Santa Claus will be here."

Panzy demurred, but after sufficient persuasion on the part of the teacher and encouragement by the pupils, supplemented by vicious pokings of fingers in her ribs, she got up and took the platform, reciting as follows:

"Where can a man buy a cap for his knee,
Or a key for a lock of his hair?
Can his eyes be called an academy
Because there are pupils there?

In the crown of his head what gems are found,
Who travels the bridge of his nose?
Can he use, when shingling the roof of his house,
The nails on the end of his toes?

Can the crook of his elbow be sent to jail,
If so, what did he do?
How does he sharpen his shoulder blades,
I'll be hanged if I know, do you?

Can he sit in the shade of the palm of his hand,

Or beat on the drum of his ear?
Does the calf of his leg eat the corn on his toes,
If so, why not grow corn on his ear?''

This recitation was remarkably well rendered and the children called for another one but Macel, looking out of the window, announced that she saw Santa coming, and for every one to get into his own seat, be quiet and respectful, and say ''thank you'' for what he got.

Santa Claus was loaded down with various toys and trinkets and a generous supply of candy all done up in separate packages with the children's names. There was much hilarity during the distribution, the children were enjoying themselves as only mountain children can, reared in the pure atmosphere of boundless freedom, they could shout without drawing a crowd and throw snowballs without breaking windows and consequent arrest by the nearest policeman; and throw snowballs they soon did, for when they had identified Santa Claus as Mr. Proudfoot, they stopped peppering each other and literally annihilated him with soft snow balls, which were instruments of affection rather than of punishment.

John Scott and Macel were left alone in the school house. John was unwrapping a small

package which had borne his name when the "treat" was distributed. It proved to a square piece of what the mountain people call "Pound Cake", and unfolding a slip of paper, he read, "This tastes like wedding cake, but it is only Chrismas Cake, John." He looked at Macel and smiled.

"Mrs. Proudfoot fixed that up for you. I told her you would be here," she said.

"It was nice of her to remember me," said John. "Did you suggest this too?"

"Don't ask such foolish questions," retorted Macel. "I guess they are gone with their snow balls and it will be safe for us to go now."

They made ready and left the school house, and as they stood a moment outside the door overlooking the village, they made a couple of most striking appearance.

* * * * *

Chapter XI

Christmas

"How sweet are looks that ladies bend
On whom their favors fall!
For them I battle till the end,
To save from shame and thrall."
* * * From Sir Galahad.

When John and Macel left the school house, they went directly to his sleigh and after stopping at Mr. Proudfoot's a few minutes to get some of Macel's things, started at once for Sang Run. John drove slowly for he had many things to talk about. He wondered whether or not Macel would speak of what he felt sure they were both thinking of, but it appeared to him that she was trying to avoid the subject by constantly mentioning something else.

Finally he said, "Well, how did you make it the morning after I left you at Mr. Proudfoot's?"

"Oh! all right," answered Macel. "I told them I couldn't stand the crowd at the hotel and just came up there and went to bed."

"Have they ever heard of the fight on the railroad track that night?" asked John.

"Yes, they have heard rumors but know nothing definite. Mrs. Proudfoot has asked me several times who was at the hotel, what they were doing, and all that, but I told her I left too early to see much," answered Macel.

"Have you ever thought of the position you would be in if the truth should come out?" asked John Scott.

"Yes, I have," she answered. "Do you sup-

pose I could forget it for a minute? It has been a nightmare to me all winter. Oh! Mr. Scott, sometimes I think I can't stand it. You know that one man was killed and Mrs. Coon cut with a knife so badly that she is not completely well yet. To think that I would go to that hotel and drink whiskey with such men and then,—away in the night be out with them. And then the fight, Oh! it was terrible. If it had not been for you, Mr. Scott, what would have become of me?"

"Just wait a minute," said John, "I want you to get me right after this. I am Mr. Scott to strangers only. My friends call me John. What are you going to call me after this?" It must be admitted that John tried to look very tender while saying this, and he had found that his arm was more at ease along the back of the seat just behind Macel's shoulder.

"Why, why, John; I am going to call you John, of course. We certainly aren't strangers any more, are we?" answered Macel.

"No," said John, "not strangers; I think we ought to be mighty good friends. And do you know I have been wanting a chance to talk with you all winter. I knew when you took the Altoona school that you would have your hands

full, and then that mix-up that night I was afraid would ruin you completely, but it seems to have blown over."

"There is one thing I want to ask you," said Macel, "do you smoke cigarettes?"

"I sometimes do," answered John.

"How many did you smoke in Mr. Proudfoot's yard that night?" asked the girl.

"Oh, about half a dozen, I expect," he answered, "Why?"

"Mrs. Proudfoot found them and accused me of having Leroy Morrison there that night," she answered.

"The dickens she did," said John Scott. "I see you are still regarded as a suspicious character."

"Oh, that's all past and forgotten now," said Macel.

"Now," said John, "I am going to make a long speech and you can answer it and then we will talk about something else. I am going to talk very straight. I am much older than you and know a good deal of the world. I am not a lady's man. It has been years since I have courted any girl. Of course, when I meet the right girl I expect to marry her if I can and she is going to have a hard time to prevent me from

doing it. I don't see just how I have missed knowing you before this. I know about every one else for miles around here, but if I ever saw you before that morning on Fitzsimmons' store platform, I do not remember it. I have thought of you a good deal since that. I saw you on the railroad track that night and followed, thinking you might need protection. I have been watching you from afar all winter. I am aware that Leroy Morrison is going with you, and of course have no right to approve or disapprove. I believe you are a good girl, but I am not so sure about Leroy. That, however, is not my particular business. We are friends by mutual agreement, Macel. Is it very likely that we might be much better friends? Do you fully understand all I mean? Now I am going to listen to you."

Macel waited several minutes before saying anything. Finally she said, "John Scott, why is it every one calls you John Scott? I have heard your name mentioned a thousand times, I believe, but it is never Mr. Scott and seldom John, it is always John Scott. Somehow it makes a person think of you as somebody or something strong and powerful, and I believe that is the way every one thinks of you. I

know I do. I think you are the best and wisest man I ever knew, but somehow I feel like a little girl when I am with you, and you seem like a good man just like Dad. A friend like you is a mighty good thing to have, but honestly, I don't know whether or not I can ever think differently. Maybe. Oh! I wish I could say so, but, John, I do think a good deal of Leroy Morrison, I just can't help it. It seems sort of like we are just suited for each other; but I don't know, honestly, I don't know. Oh! my dear good friend, can you understand?"

"I understand," said John. "You have given me a pretty good answer. Now suppose this little talk of ours remains our own secret."

"It always will, John," answered the gird, and reaching for his she removed the glove and holding his bare hand in both of her, carried it to her lips. There was a pucker about her mouth and tears in her eyes. In the after years of Macel Adams' life she often thought of this moment and wished with tears in her heart as well as her eyes, that she had answered him differently.

They were now almost in sight of the Adams home, and John, reaching under the seat of the sleigh, got out a package.

"Here, Macel," he said, "is a Christmas gift for you. It is only a book but it is the best book for a girl to read that I know of. It is "The Lamplighter" by M. S. Cummins. My two favorite books of fiction are "The Lamplighter" by M. S. Cummins and "Barriers Burned Away" by E. P. Roe. The one exemplifies the highest type of womanhood, and the other of young manhood that I have ever seen. If this book impresses you as it has me, you will appreciate it, I know."

"Oh! thanks," said Macel, "but here we are at home. What must I tell them, that you are my beau or just a friend?"

"Don't tell them anything," said John. "Just leave them guessing."

As they drove up to the Adams home, Macel's father came out of the house and greeted John jovially. They had met on several occasions and each entertained a very high regard for the other.

Samuel Adams had by hard work and good management cleared up a large farm and was considered "a good liver". He was still a comparatively young man, probably not more than five years John's senior. Indeed they were near enough of an age to discuss many things from the same view point.

As Macel went into the house, John and Sam, as they called each other, took the horse and sleigh to the barn where both were put away and the horse provided for, for he night. Mr. Adams then told John to go back to the house and stay by the fire as he had some feeding to do, but John preferred to accompany him and look at his stock. When they returned to the house supper was ready and John was introduced to Mrs. Adams, who exclaimed, "Law, I know John Scott. I saw him at the reunion at Buckhannon eighteen years ago."

"Can I be that old?" asked John.

"You must be," answered Mrs. Adams. "You were trying to grow a mustache even then," she added laughingly.

"That was before I was born," put in Macel.

"I am in my dotage now, I see that," said John.

"Oh! no," said Mr. Adams, "you haven't got the mustache to going yet."

After supper they all sat around the fire for two or three hours, cracking nuts and playing games. After all the younger children had gone to bed, Mr. and Mrs. Adams looked at each other and John knew they were wondering whether they should retire and leave him and

Macel together for a night's "sparking" as was yet the custom among the mountain people.

After a little while Mrs. Adams took Macel into the kitchen where John knew she was being questioned, but on their return and before giving them a chance to say anything, he said, "You women can go to bed when you get ready, Sam and I are going to sit and talk politics for awhile. They did talk of politics and many other things till far into the night and when they finally retired, Samuel Adams knew that John Scott was Mecel's friend but not her lover. He also felt the responsibility of being her father was greater than he had before supposed.

The next morning the two men went rabbit hunting but returned in time for dinner, and found that Mrs. Adams had succeeded in turning the turkey that Macel said must weigh a hundred pounds, until it was thoroughly roasted on all sides.

After dinner John spent another jolly hour with the Adams family and then hitching his horse to the sleigh, bade them goodbye. He had found the family a very interesting one. There were other children almost as old as Macel who gave promise of being almost as beautiful.

After leaving the Adams home, John drove back to Altoona where, stopping at Fitzsimmons' store, he bought more candy and toys, and then driving more rapidly for several miles, finally stopped before the barn that Fred Brown had built. Here he unhitched his horse and put him in a stall and fed him, then gathering his packages from the sleigh, slipped quietly into the kitchen before the family was aware of his presence.

His packages, however, were no longer a burden for with cries of "Daddy Johnsy, Daddy Johnsy", the children were on him and over him and had soon apparently appropriated everything about him but his clothes.

"We had about given you up, John," said Miska looking wistful.

"Never give up," said John. "I haven't missed a Christmas here for ten years, but today I am a little late for I was detained."

And then while the children were busy with their presents, John told Miska where he had been and what had detained him.

"Are you going a-courting, John?" asked Miska laughing.

"No not yet," he answered, and then went into some detail in explaining how he had come

to be at the Adams home that day. John and Miska sat for a long time that evening talking of childhood days and the intervening years; finally Miska jumped up saying, "Oh! I forgot supper. The children and I ate a late dinner; we waited awhile for you, John, thinking you might come. I'll have to get supper now." But Mistie, the older girl, said, "Mamma, we have plenty of pie and cake, why not have pie and cake and milk for supper? I will get it ready."

Miska started to get up but John held her back, saying "Let Mistie fix things. Don't you think you are old enough to take things easy?"

"Am I getting old, John? Do I look old? You know, I am like Melchizedec. So far as I know, I have neither father nor mother. No beginning of life, for do you know it, I have never had a birthday, I have no idea when or where I was born. It is a pretty bad shape to be in, isn't it?"

"Well," answered John, "It is a sort of peculiar situation, but if I remember rightly Melchizedec was not so bad off after all, for even Father Abraham gave him one tenth of all his profits. I wouldn't let a little thing like the absence of birthdays worry me. For my part, I'm having too many of them."

"Why, you're not feeling old, are you, John?" she asked.

"Oh! I don't feel exactly like an Ancient Mariner," said John, "but I can't deny the fact that there have been times in my life that I certainly felt younger than I know I am now."

"Oh! well," said Miska, "life has been pretty good to us, John, if only Fred could be with us."

"Fred was a Prince," answered John, "and these children, Miska, I would give ten thousand dollars apiece for them, if they could be really mine."

"They are good children," said Miska, "and, John, they are yours as much as they can be. Fred willed them to you. You are the only daddy they will ever know."

Just then Mistie sang out from the kitchen,

"Cake and pie, high and dry,
Jump-up Johnies in the sky,
Pudding and milk as fine as silk,
Come into my kitchen said the spider to the fly."

After supper John hitched his horse to the sleigh and took them all for a ride down as far as Mr. Snyder's, their closest neighbor, where he left them. Miska said they would visit awhile and then walk back home.

After reaching home that night, John Scott sat for a long time before his own fire. His mother had been dead many years. His father was old and in failing health. He had neither brother nor sister. A faithful negro, Harry, whom he had rescued from jail several years before, had been his housekeeper, cook, servant and man-of-all-work. As John sat there that night he reviewed in his mind the many things he had set out to do, but his musings all ended in the thought "All this have I done, what lack I yet?"

* * * * *

Chapter XII

Thorns and Orange Blossoms.

"We shall pass through the Winter of sorrow and strife,
To the glorious Springtime of Summer and life."

* * * * *

Winter passed rapidly into spring. Leroy Morrison who had apparently recovered some of his health and drooping spirits, made fast and furious attacks upon Macel's heart. He spent all his spare time in her company when

she would permit it, and it must be conceded that she permitted a great deal of it. He seldom visited Dr. Johnson's office any more, and so far as known, kept entirely away from the Opera House.

His salary as clerk in Fitzsimmons' store was not large and barely met his needs for dress and pocket money, but by careful watching he had been able to filch money from the sale of goods which he hoped to increase to an amount sufficient to pay wedding expenses when Spring came.

It was doubtful if he had made any plans after that. If he had they were probably based on an estimate of how much Macel could save out of her winter's salary and upon the supposition that if necessary, she could teach again the next winter. But it is very likely that he had no definite plans whatever except in contemplation of the few weeks following his marriage in which he would revel in his new possession and tear away the cloak of maidenly reserve which Macel still maintained towards him. No doubt he felt that marriage would give him the right to demand and take, and that neither her feelings nor her body would have a right to flinch. Such is usually the idea of

men of his kind, and many a blushing bride has found to her dismay that the tender lover has at once become the sensuous brute when he became her husband. Macel herself might have guessed all this for many times he had tried to subdue her modesty and made immoral and indecent proposals to her, but in her ignorance she thought this was the way of all men, and that it was the man's province "to try and the woman's to deny."

It is a sad condition of social life, let it be in the gilded halls of the city or in the remotest valleys among the hills, when such a double standard of human morals is tolerated. No man should ask or expect more of a woman than he is prepared to give, and the man who seeks to traduce the woman he professes to love should be treated as a degenerate.

Macel Adams was sure she loved Leroy Morrison and had faith in his love for her, and believed him when he begged her for that she could not give, and told her it would only make him love her the more. She did not know that this lie was as old as the hills, had been repeated a million time and would be repeated a million times more, and ignorant girls would believe it.

The school had taxed Macel's patience to the

limit and after all, considering her youth and inexperience, it was at least a moderate success. She was a girl far above the average and John Scott had not underestimated her when he thought of what she might, with proper opportunity, become, but according to Squire Bailey's doctrine, she was likely "to be caught young" for she had promised Leroy to marry him in the spring.

There was but one unfortunate occurrence to mar Macel's record in the after part of the winter. School was to close March 15th and on Saturday morning of the week before she had decided to go to Clarksburg and make some purchases, returning on Sunday. Mentioning this to some of the village girls, it was proposed and finally arranged that three or four other girls with their "fellows" and of course, Leroy also, would go along. They all went to the Commercial Hotel at Clarksburg and after spending the day shopping around the city, all returned there and remained for the night, the girls all together in one room and the young men in other rooms about the hotel.

But late in the afternoon, Macel had met a friend who had once lived on Sang Run and, after some persuasion, agreed to go home with

her and remain for the night, but said she would have to look up some of the crowd and tell them. Leroy, who was along, offered to tell the others of the arrangement. This he did, but afterward failed to return to the hotel himself for the night. On the return journey Macel and Leroy were joked and guyed a good deal about their absence from the hotel the night before and it was hinted in a good-natured way that they may have been together all night after all. This was embarrassing to Macel and she truthfully explained where she had spent the night, and knowing herself innocent of wrongdoing, she believed Leroy was telling the truth of his whereabouts also. It happened that some of the young men knew that Leroy was not where he had claimed to be, giving some color to their thrusts at Macel. What they did *not* know was that he had spent the night in a house of ill fame in the Glen Elk section of the city. It was impossible to prevent some whisper of the disgraceful supposition from leaking out about the village, and before the school closed, it was common gossip that Macel Adams and Leroy Morrison had separated themselves from the others and stayed together some place else that night in Clarksburg.

The story of the cigarette stubs in Proudfoot's yard the morning after Macel stayed there alone was at once revived. Other suppositions were added and when school closed and she left for her home on Sang Run her reputation was no longer a matter of question, it had been torn to tatters and Mrs. Proutfoot expressed the common opinion when she said, "the sooner they get married now, the better."

Some went so far as to characterize her as a "dirty hussy" and "that Adams girl", and more than one mother cautioned her daughter that "if she didn't watch out, she would be no more thought of than Macel Adams". Macel and her parents soon heard the reports and wrote to Clarksburg and received a letter in return fully vindicating her, but it did no good, the damage was done and Macel could not help herself, but she shed many tears and spent many sleepless nights, thinking in silent agony.

"Once I was pure as the snow, but I fell,
Fell like the snow flakes from Heaven to Hell,
Fell to be trampled like filth in the street,
Fell to be scoffed, to be spit on and beat."

It is no wonder that she was willing to hasten her marriage with Leroy Morrison who seemed

to be the only one who had faith in her, and Leroy only probably because he knew her to be without blame.

John Scott also heard these reports and, while he doubted them, was not in a position to deny them, nor could he explain the cigarette stubs in the Proudfoots' yard, such an explanation would call for others which would make matters worse.

So in early spring the wedding took place. To Macel it meant freedom from slanderous, lying tongues, and the new found happiness of love's young dream. To Leroy it meant more than anything else, a period of idleness and sexual dissipation, less dangerous and much more enticing than the Opera House or the slums of Clarksburg. The modest and over-prudish will blush with alarm, but it is true nevertheless that the marriage bed often hides more heinous crimes than any Turkish harem.

Leroy had lost his place in Mr. Fitzsimmons' store. He would not be needed during the spring and summer months, and besides, the merchant had come to doubt his honesty and was glad for an excuse to let him go. That he had seemed a sort of superior being to Macel, was probably because she had met so few young

men who were well dressed and had even a veneer of polish.

For a short time after the marriage everything was bright and rosy. Macel had her new dresses and Leroy's clothes were still good.

Samuel Adams welcomed his new son-in-law into the humble home on Sang Run, but wondered just what he expected to do and what his resources were. It was a great holiday for Macel, taking Leroy to see all her uncles and aunts and sauntering up and down country roads. When at home, of course, she helped with the housework and Leroy occasionally volunteered to help in the corn field.

One day both she and Leroy were in Altoona and while he was loking after some business for Mr. Adams, she went into Dr. Johnson's office to get a Belladona plaster for her mother who had an attack of lumbago. Before leaving, she said, "Doctor, what's good for fever blisters? I have one on my lip that won't get well."

The doctor glared at the blister for a moment and looked more serious. He then went to a cabinet and extracting a glass slide, secured a small smear of moisture from the sore. "Just wait a minute and I will tell you," he said. Then placing the glass under his microscope

and adjusting what is known to physicians and bacteriologists as 'the dark field illumination,' he called to her to come and look. "Do you see that spiral shaped shred waving around down there?" he asked.

"Yes," answered Macel, "I do."

"That," said the doctor, "is the treponema. That thing on your lip is not a fever blister, it is a chancre, the initial lesion of syphilis. No wonder it does not heal."

Macel looked surprised and somewhat alarmed but was plainly ignorant of the full purport of what he said.

"But where did I get it?" she asked.

"You have kissed or been kissed by some one who has it," answered the doctor.

"But no one but Leroy has kissed me," said Macel.

"Then you have gotten it from him," answered Dr. Johnson, and seeing that she knew very little about the disease, he went into great detail. He told her that if she remained untreated, a rash followed by eruptive sores might break out on her body and that each sore might be a source of infection to others; that women infected with syphilis seldom gave birth to a living child, at least not until the disease

became chronic, and even then the child would inherit it and with great danger of being deformed or feeble minded. He went on to explain, and showed her many pictures in medical books, proving his words that insanity, paralysis and many of the misfortunes and ills of life are due to syphilis, facts which are not generally known because people do not discuss these diseases as they do others and because of the modesty which is often false but sometimes real.

When the doctor had finished, Macel was very pale. She fully understood his plain words and realized the danger. She did not burst into tears or into railery at Leroy. She knew that it would do no good. Instead, she asked, "Doctor, how long will it take to cure me?"

"About three years," answered the doctor, "if you take medicine every day."

Further conversation was prevented by Leroy who had been looking all over the village for Macel, and finally decided to go to Dr. Johnson's office.

"What the devil has kept you here so long?" demanded Leroy when he found her sitting in Dr. Johnson's private office without any apparent intention of leaving.

Neither Macel nor the doctor made any answer.

"I want to know why you have so much business with Dr. Johnson," again demanded Leroy. Macel still remained silent but looking at the doctor, plainly indicated with her eyes "you tell him."

"Macel and I," said the doctor, "have been discussing a very serious matter. I have shown her something that I want you to see also, and then I will tell you why she has been here so long."

Very reluctantly Leroy was induced to look through the miscroscope where he admitted he could see the germ.

The doctor told him much that he had told Macel but it only made Leroy angry. Finally he jumped up, saying, "It's a lie, a damned lie. There's nothing of that kind the matter with me."

The doctor placed his hand on Leroy's shoulder. "Turn around to the window and open your mouth," he commanded. Leroy started to refuse but finally complied.

"It's in your mouth and all over your throat, young man. Denials do no good. Dr. Johnson then gave Leroy 'a piece of his mind' in lan-

guage which would probably burn these pages if they were printed, but wound up by giving some very sound medical advice. In the end, Leroy capitulated and left the office with sufficient medicine to last both Macel and himself a month.

And Macel Morrison for the first time in many days thought of John Scott as she looked at the man she was compelled by law to call her husband, but the comparison was odious.

* * * * *

Chapter XIII

Independence Day

"As the timber is great or small,
So, strong or weak, the house will stand or fall."

* * * * *

On the trip back to Sang Run from Altoona, very little was said. Leroy was sullenly abusive and Macel very caustically positive. Leroy finally admitted that he probably got the disease while on the trip to Clarksburg and so mixed up his admissions and denials that Macel easily inferred how he had spent the night.

They agreed in the end to make the best of a bad job and to take their medicine and keep their mouths shut. But at nights when Leroy was absent or asleep, Macel would often lie in her bed, her eyes wide open and staring into the darkness. Sometimes she could see the happy home of which she had always dreamed, and tried to picture Leroy there; but more often the picture would fade into one of olive drab and a man on horseback would go flitting past. But usually, she could see herself stripped naked and with foul smelling sores all over her body. Then pressing her fingers to her lips where the fever blister had been, she wondered if it could all be a mistake. But try as she could, these wakeful dreams would come and in the darkness she could imagine a knowing look passing between Dr. Johnson and John Scott, and hear again the Doctor's words "Syphilis"—"Running Sores on the body"—"Dead babies"—"Half witted children"—"Paralysis"—"Insanity" etc.

Grandmother Adams had been too old fashioned to sympathize with Macel's ambitions and when the girl had secured a teacher's certificate and contracted for the school at Altoona she had prophesied many dire things. Of these

Macel now thought, but none of them had ever approached the horrid truth.

In June Leroy went to spend several days with his parents, telling Macel he hoped to make some arrangements to go to housekeeping while there, but promised to meet her at Altoona where there would be a celebration on the Fourth of July.

On the morning of the Fourth, John Scott sent Harry, the colored man, with the wagon to take Miska and the children to Altoona, but as usual, he mounted his horse and rode alone.

Judge Williams from the County Seat, was to make the principal address of the day, but John was an effective public speaker and had been asked to introduce the Judge and make a speech of considerable length himself. When John reached the picnic ground a very large crowd had already gathered and flags, bunting and a spirit of patriotism seemed to fill the air. The Grand Army of the Republic had mustered out its few surviving members, and the Sons of Veterans in full uniform were everywhere in evidence. The Great World War was on but had not yet reached America.

As the martial music ceased and John stepped to the front of the platform, he took in

the audience with a glance, very few of whom were strangers to him. On one side sat Miska and her girls, and not far away he noticed the fair haired girl who had once jilted him, sitting with her husband, but much farther away he saw Macel Morrison and she was sitting alone.

"My friends," said John Scott, "in my short talk today I am not going to enter into any discussion of the Declaration of Independence or its anniversary. I am going to leave that to Judge Williams who will make the patriotic address of the day. I am going to talk awhile on 'Man's Duty to Man,' referring especially to the changing social conditions of our mountain country."

It is not the intention to quote any part of John's speech that day, print and paper are entirely inadequate, but he clearly described the social and economic conditions existing in great centers of population and in industrial communities; then, throwing back his shoulders and clinching his fists, he apparently tore burning words of facts and caution from his mouth and slung them into the audience, and when he ceased to introduce Judge Williams, the whole audience rose in a mighty cheer and begged him to go on. And while the Judge made an

address that day which has seldom been equaled, it was the words of John Scott that were remembered, some of them being quoted by the mountain farmers unto this day.

The noon hour was one of feast and general social gaiety. Miska had brought a great basket of dinner in the wagon and wanted John to eat with her, but he preferred to go from table to table eating just a little from each of them. After awhile he came to the family of Samuel Adams where Macel and her mother were gathering up the remains of their dinner. Picking up a wishbone, Macel turned to him saying, "Mr.—or Oh! I mean, John, let's both make a wish and see who gets it."

"All right," said John. "I have wished."

"So have I," answered Macel. "Now pull."

When it broke, Macel had the short end of the bone. "Oh!" she said, "I knew you would win for my wish was impossible. What did you wish for, John?"

They were standing a little distance from the others, but John said "Let's go up and sit down on that log, and I will tell you my wish." After being seated, John said, "I expect if Leroy knew my wish he would sue me for damages, so we will call it a 'make believe' wish.

My wish, Macel, was that you had not married Leroy Morrison. Now what was your wish? You see mine was impossible too."

"Why," answered Macel, "it's funny isn't it; I wished that I had never married him too."

"Did you really wish it, Macel?"

"I did, and do," she answered, "and you?"

"I was equally sincere," answered John, "but where is Leroy today?"

"Where is he? Why he's over there in Andy Foster's barn dead drunk. I went over while Judge Williams was speaking to see about him but he only cursed me. Dad was along and he said to just let him alone. I wish to the Lord I had never seen him." Then rolling up the sleeve of her dress she said, "John, do you know what disease this breaking out is?"

John examined it carefully, "I think I do," he answered. "Where did you get it?"

"I got it from Leroy and he has it too. He got it from some woman in Clarksburg when we were there last winter. I suppose you heard the story about us, that we stayed somewhere together that night. Well, it was all a lie. I stayed with Sarah Jones, and Leroy spent the night in a bawdy house in Glen Elk and there is where he got this, and now I have it. Do you blame me for my wish?"

"I certainly do not," answered John, taking off his hat. Many years before when scarcely more than a boy he had in his rage stamped a much less valuable hat into the ground. He now felt the impulse to do the same thing again.

"It's a shame," said John. "I was afraid you would regret it. I tried to throw out a few hints but it seemed no use. I would have liked to give you a chance, Macel girl, but I am afraid you are 'in mighty bad' now."

"Oh! I know it, John. I have made my bed and I'll have to lie in it, but Oh, it's so different from what I had expected and hoped for."

"But this disease, Macel," said John. "Do you know how serious it is? You will have to be cured. Are you taking any medicine?"

"Oh! yes," she answered, "I am taking Dr. Johnson's medicine every day. He said he could cure it in two or three years."

"Dr. Johnson is a good man, but I am not sure he is prepared to give you the best treatment," said John. "You had better ask him about it when you see him again."

"I will," answered Macel, "but you don't know how near this thing has come to killing me, and the whole family knows there is some-

thing wrong or Leroy and I would not both be taking medicine three or four times a day. And Dr. Johnson says it is catching and we are liable to give it to any body we touch or who wipes on the same towel. Oh, it's terrible! Tell me what to do."

"I can't," answered John Scott. "Just grin and bear it. I suppose that's what a million other women have done."

"It's going to be mighty hard," answered Macel.

"Now," said John, "I have talked about long enough to another man's wife, but I'm going to say just this much more. I am not a lonely man but since my mother died I have often been a lonesome one. Some day I will find the key to what I want—what I must have. I thought for awhile that you might be the key, but I was mistaken. I must still go my own way and work out my own salvation. You, Macel, are 'damaged goods,' but remember, my girl, that even at that you are not 'for sale' at any price. Hold fast to your self respect, and if ever I can help you, let me know. Will you promise me that?"

"Yes, I promise," she answered.

They were ready to part but a disturbance

in another part of the picnic ground attracted their attention and they both started in that direction but met Mr. Adams looking for Macel. He said they were having a drunken row and Leroy was among them. He thought they had better try to get him out of it and take him home.

"All right," said Macel. "Are you going along, John?"

"No," answered John Scott, "I'm afraid I would want to kill the dirty skunk. I will stay out of it."

Macel and Mr. Adams succeeded in getting Leroy into the road wagon and then collecting the rest of the family, drove in disgust to Sang Run where the darkness of night soon hid what they considered the family's disgrace.

John Scott spent the remainder of the afternoon circulating among the crowd, but finally finding Judge Williams, he accompanied him to the train. The Judge spoke very complimentary of John's speech of the morning and finally said, "Scott, you can't get out of it any longer, we are going to send you to the State Senate next year. You are too big for these mountains, you will have to get out."

"Thanks, Judge," said John, "I suppose

every man likes to hear that kind of talk about himself whether it is true or not, but I was raised in these mountains and here is where my best friends live, so I am going to stay here among them. It will take something big to jolt me out."

"It will come," said the judge as he boarded the train.

John Scott did not suspect it, neither did the Judge know what it was, but the big thing was coming, was even then on its way.

John then turned to look for Miska but found that Harry had bundled her and the children into the wagon and started for home. He then secured his horse and rode out of the village, but did not go directly home, for again he visited the cemetery, and in the dusk of evening planted another sprig upon his mother's grave; but this time it was a weeping willow.

* * * * *

Chapter XIV

His First Love

"The heart that once truly loves never forgets,

But as truly loves on to its close,
As the sunflower turns to her god when he sets,
The same look that she gave when he rose."

* * * * *

John Scott was sitting at his desk looking over some important papers. He had just made sale of a valuable tract of timber land on which his profits amounted to several thousand dollars. He had made some other investments which had turned out better than he had expected. His bank books showed balances which a few years before would have appeared as fortunes to him. Political preferment had been, and was even then knocking at his door. A pile of unopened mail which had accumulated during a short absence was lying on his desk. There was no longer any doubt about it, he was a prosperous, successful man, a leading citizen. All this he knew, but there was something lacking—he was not jubilant, not even as happy as a man in his position should be.

Glancing out of the window, he saw that a woman had gotten off a horse at his gate. He wondered who it could be, but as she came

toward the house he saw that it was Clara, the fair haired girl who years before had jilted him for an older man with "greater expectations." For a moment, a wave of resentment passed over him, but as she came in at the door he arose with a smile, shook hands with her warmly and offered her a cushioned chair. She was no longer the straight backed, high headed, vivacious girl he had at first known. Her eyes no longer danced and sparkled with life, wit and happiness.

"This is a pleasant surprise," said John. "My lady visitors have about all lost their calling cards."

"Well," said Clara, "it *has* been a long time since you had a visit from me, and it has been a coon's age since you were at our house. But how has the world been using you, John?"

"Oh," said John, "just about fifty-fifty—it's about an even break. I am getting just about as much out of the world as it's getting out of me, I guess. At least, I am as well off as Larkin Moore was when his first born was laid in his arms. I am now 'holding my own'."

John was watching her closely, wondering what her business was. She had evidently dressed with considerable care and was trying to look

brave, but only succeeded in looking distressed. After some further conversation which amounted to very little, Clara said, "John, I have come to you for a favor. I might have gone to others but somehow I felt that I could make you understand better. We are in debt and unless we raise the money at once, we will lose our home. I have come to you, John, because years ago you said to me, 'Clara, if you ever regret your bargain or are in need of a friend, come to me.' John, I have come."

"Do you regret the past?" asked John slowly.

"Oh, John, I do regret the past. I have regretted it every minute for the past ten years. I did not always lie to you, I told you the truth when I said I loved you. It was only in the end when I said I didn't, that I lied. I wanted to have a fine home, money, clothes, influence and all the things like that. I was ambitious and thought you were poor and would never amount to anything. Henry dressed well, had plenty of money to spend and made me believe he would soon get rich."

"I lacked all of them," said John. "I was not handsome, I dressed according to my means, I did not spend money because my par-

ents needed it. I did not claim I would be rich. You were justified in marrying Henry, but you were not justified in lying to both of us. You said you loved him, no doubt he believed it. I always knew you did not. You have never deceived me for one minute. You are reaping your own harvest."

The words were bitter ones, but his voice was gentle and his eyes were tender.

Clara now leaned forward till she was very close to him.

"John," she said, "I have come today to tell you the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. I did love you before I ever even told you so, I loved you when I said I did not and married Henry, but, before God, John, I did not know how it would be. I liked him and thought I could forget you. It is not his fault that he has not succeeded in life; he just couldn't. But it is his fault that he has not been a good husband to me. I have watched you climb and every success you have made has been a dagger of regret and remorse to me. I have seen what might have been mine."

"Of all sad words of tongue or pen,
The saddest are these: it might have been,"

quoted John.

"And, Oh! John," continued Clara, "I did not come to tell you this, but I have promised the truth and I am going to say it all. My heart is breaking. I am wicked. Oh! I don't know what is going to become of me, I have prayed for Henry to die. I have threatened to leave him and get a divorce and then come to you. I am here now, John, do you want me? If you do, I am all yours."

John had arisen and Clara, who was now standing in front of him, now put her hands on each side of his face and with tears runing down her cheeks, pleaded, "Oh, John, say you love me—say you want me still."

John remained motionless for a moment but as she removed her hands he reached for a book of poems lying on his desk and opened it at a place marked by a silk ribbon, pointed to the following lines which were heavily underscored.

"Long, long be my heart with such memories filled
Like a vase in which flowers have once been distilled,
You may break, you may shatter the vase as you will
The scent of the roses will cling to it still."

Clara must have read it several times before handing the book back.

"That," said John, "expresses my feelings. The love I bore you has long since disappeared and is now only a pleasant memory around which some scent still clings. You still offer me your love, you even offer more. It is not yours to offer, you are Henry's wife and I would be a selfish dog to take it. Besides, I owe much of what little success in life I have made to you. When you threw me over I was almost distracted for a time. For days I roamed the woods and honestly believe if I had met Henry then I would have killed him if I could. I finally came home, and standing on that hill you can see through the window, I took my hat from my head and stamped it into the earth, I tore my shirt from my back and ripped it into shreds, and with clinched fists, I swore with blasphemous curses that I would climb, climb and climb until I became rich and powerful, and that the time would come when Henry would beg of me for aid and you would come and offer yourself to me on any terms. It was a wicked oath, Clara, and I have long repented it, but I have never for a moment doubted that some of it would come to pass."

"Oh, I see that it is no use now," moaned the woman. "I thought maybe you felt differently."

"How much will it take to square up all your debts and leave your farm clear?" asked John after a few minutes silence.

"There is one thousand besides the interest still due on the land and we owe several hundred dollars more. It will take two thousand dollars to put us clear out of debt."

"Whew!" said John. "That's a lot of money; about as much as the farm would bring, isn't it?"

"I guess it is," answered Clara. "You can just about figure the shape we are in."

"Is the farm in your name or Henry's?" asked John.

"The farm is deeded to me," answered Clara, "but the other notes for money we owe are signed by both of us."

"I see," said John, and then after intently studying the ends of his finger nails for a moment, reached into his desk for his check book and slowly wrote a check and afterwards a note, payable on demand for an equal amount. Then handing the note to Clara, he said, "Sign that, please."

"Oh," she said after reading it, "it calls for two thousand dollars and says 'pay on demand'. We would have to have time."

"That's all right," answered John. "You need two thousand dollars don't you, and the demand will not be made very soon; you will be given plenty of time."

She signed and returned the note to him and he handed her the check.

"Now, Clara," said John Scott, "go home and tell Henry you have borrowed the money and given me your note. Pay off all your debts and try to live in peace and comfort. For you and I there can be no future together. If you had thought differently at one time and had willed to help me, I believe we could, between us, have built a temple of life much greater than I can ever build alone. But fate decreed otherwise and my dream castles vanished, and I was left bareheaded and naked. My own future is in the hands of what ever Gods there may be, yours is with your husband. He has not been a bad man, but rather an unsuccessful one, and remember he has placed his life at your disposal as you have yours at his. Be

'To his faults a little blind,
And to his virtues very kind.'

Think only of me as a friend in need, and your days will yet be blessed with happiness."

John Scott was not a saint. Indeed, like the rest of us, he was very much a sinner, but as he now stood before his desk looking at the woman who had first taught him to love, he looked almost transformed. But the apparent change in the woman was even greater. The color came back into her pale cheeks and the brightness into her eyes, and but for the gray hairs which so plentifully sprinkled her head, she would have seemed almost the girl again. Taking one of his hands in each of hers, she said, "John Scott, I have been a bad, deceitful woman and you are the best man that ever lived. May I kiss you on the cheek?

"I shall be honored," answered John smiling.

John accompanied her to the gate and assisted her in mounting the horse. As she started away she said, "Come and see us sometime, John, I can cook as good as I used to."

"I should love to," answered John.

After Clara had disappeared from sight, John returned to the house and sitting down at his desk rolled and lighted a cigarette and then noticing the note which Clara had signed

still lying on the desk, he picked it up, glanced at the signature, and applying the flickering match to it, burned it to ashes.

Then, leaving his mail still unopened, he strapped on his spurs, went to the barn, mounted his horse and rode straight to the home of Miska Brown and the five little girls.

In his boyish anger and grief, John Scott had sworn to accomplish certain things, most of which had come to pass, but he felt no satisfaction with himself; instead, he roundly declared himself to be an unmitigated fool.

Have not others had the same experience?

* * * * *

Chapter XV

The Wages of Sin

"But I shall stand in silence then
And hear the stories brave,
For I must answer at the last
That sin is all I gave."

* * * * *

As winter approached, Leroy insisted that Macel procure the home school and teach again, pointing out that her certificate was good for

another year and it would be a shame to waste it.

Macel tried to explain to him that approaching motherhood would prevent her from finishing a school if she even started to teach one. Leroy still insisted that she teach a few months anyhow as they needed the money. She still pleaded with him to go to work somewhere and make it unnecessary for her to undergo the ordeal she knew a few months teaching would be for her in her present condition.

"There is nothing around here for me to do," argued Leroy.

"You can get work on Moore's saw mill," said Macel. "Brother Ed is working there and they want more hands."

"Do you think I am going to walk three or four miles to a saw mill and work like a dog all day and then back home in the evening?" answered Leroy.

"Ed does it and I thought you could do it if he does," said Macel.

"Well, you have another think coming if that's what you thought," he answered her.

"Andy Foster wants a man to drive his team," said Macel, "that would be close home."

"What do you take me for?" almost yelled

Leroy. "Do you suppose I'm a nigger to get up at five o'clock in the morning to feed and curry a team and stay up until ten at night to scrape the mud off of them? You get my goat?"

"But what are we going to live on?" insisted Macel.

"If you had any sense, you would get that school and teach it two or three months any way. You could make a hundred dollars and it would be easy money."

"Yes, easy money—very easy money for you," she answered him.

But finally he had his way. Teachers were very scarce and the trustees were friendly to her and pitied her, and they let her have the school, although they knew when she commenced it she would not be able to finish the term.

Mr. Adams had soon found out that Leroy had no money and apparently had no prospect of help from his own people, and not wishing to burden his own household with him, had proposed to give Macel a few acres of land and help Leroy build a house. Accordingly some lumber was purchased, for which Leroy promised to pay, and Mr. Adams hauled it to the spot

and helped Leroy build a small "Yankee frame" house which had a single room and was heated only by a cook stove, but since it was the beginning of a home, Macel was almost happy as she pasted newspapers all over the walls and covered the floor with old carpets furnished by her mother.

Macel began the school on Sang Run early in September, hoping to get as much of it taught as possible before she would be compelled to quit. It was hard work getting up early to prepare breakfast and fix dinner and leave it on the table for her lord and master, afterward preparing her own lunch, tidy up the house and reach school in time to open at nine o'clock. And in the evening, worn and weary, to return home but not to rest. Supper was to prepare, dishes to wash and then when she should have been in bed, she was bending over very small garments and, although she had faint hope that they would ever be needed, she placed each stitch and worked each hem with all the care of a guardian angel. But ever and anon she saw visions that were not pleasant, and in the colors of the cloth she could often read the words "stinking, running sores on the body", "dead babies", "deformed or feeble minded chil-

dren''; and though the days were too long and the nights too short, time will not wait:

''Too soon, too soon,
The noon will be the afternoon.
Too soon today will be yesterday.''

Leroy was working some now, cutting and husking corn and helping with fall work on neighboring farms, but it was noticed in Mr. Fitzsimmons' store at Altoona that the purchases he made were to be paid for when Macel drew her pay for teaching.

Macel had been teaching nearly two months when the collapse came. She was not well in the morning and had had a very trying day up until nearly recess time in the afternoon, when feeling that it was impossible to stand on her feet or hold her head up another minute, she sat down at her desk with her head resting on her arm. The pupils, noticing that something was wrong, got very quiet, and as she remained in that position for some time, her sister who was only a few years younger, went up to her and gently shook her but Macel was entirely unconscious and only crumpled in a heap on the floor when an attempt was made to arouse her. Most of the children thought she was dead and ran home screaming. The news was carried to

the Adams home very quickly and Mr. Adams lost no time in telephoning for Dr. Johnson. Mrs. Adams was already on her way to the school house, but Samuel quickly hitched a horse to a sled before following her, knowing that dead or alive, it would be the easiest way to get Macel home.

She remained unconscious until a few minutes before Dr. Johnson arrived. The doctor remained all night, and with Mrs. Adams and a few kindly neighbor women, fought the grim monster that seemed determined to claim his victim. When morning came Macel was still alive but blessedly unconscious that a little premature form, too badly scarred for pitying eyes to see, had been carried away, and would never wear the clothes her labor had wrought.

During the many succeeding weeks in which Macel lay a broken, wilted thing, Leroy must have been greatly touched for he was very kind and at times even humble.

Many times, with tears running down his cheeks, he begged Macel to live, and promised that he would always love her, work for her, and be a better man. No doubt he was sincere, for late that winter he became a regular attendant at a revival meeting being held in the neigh-

borhood, and was one of the first to go forward to the altar. In due time, after much prayer and encouragement, Leroy was converted. His reformation seemed genuine. His sins had found him out. He had tasted of the dregs and found them bitter. He had sinned and collected the wages thereof, but had found them cold and clammy as the hand of death. He had found out for himself that indecency and immorality have no defense, and that only fools find pleasure in them.

It is fortunate indeed for mankind that there still exists some traces of the old time religion in some parts of the country; a religion based on genuine repentance, a full renunciation of sin, a conversion that reaches into the very heart of conscience with an open and public declaration to follow a new life. This is usually reached through hours, and sometimes days, of prayer and travail, in which the sinner is supposed to be washed white as snow and is accepted by the church and the community for all he professes. It is really a proposition of "come clean and stay clean" and all things will be forgiven and forgotten.

There are many who doubt the necessity of the "mourners' bench" or of a physical and

mental earthquake as an evidence of conversion from sin, but none can deny the changed and shining countenance of those who "have come through bright", nor fail to feel that some divine power has been at work. "My son who was lost is now found", "The lamb has again been brought into the fold", are realities of reformation and have been so justified by subsequent actions that the man or woman who does not believe in them can only plead ignorance of the experience.

Leroy Morrison had apparently "come clean" and was so accepted by the church and the community. To Macel it was an occasion for great rejoicing for she believed intensely in the "saving grace" and had been converted herself when only a child.

The problem of regenerating and rebuilding the lives of criminals, jail birds, prostitutes and moral failures of various kinds is without doubt the most pressing one in America today, if not throughout the world. It is costing billions of money, besides untold suffering and disappointment to the human race. Court houses and police courts of great cities are crowded with its victims. The underworld is teeming with women marked with the "Scarlet

Letter'' and men with the ''Mark of Cain''. State legislatures are passing more stringent laws and the Federal Government is weaving a band of protective and preventive measures, but the simple faith of our fathers and the forgiving spirit of the mountain mothers of our land have solved this problem over and over, for with them ''forgiven'' literally means ''forgotten,'' and the hard road of the former transgressor is transformed into a highway bounded by pillars of peace holding out encouragement, and lighted by the zeal of those who love the Lord.

Such conditions still exist in many communities, and no difference what the past transgressions of a man or woman may have been, a complete renunciation of sin and the acceptance and practical application of Christ as the Redeemer, open up the opportunity for a new life.

With spring came improved health to Macel and to Leroy a somewhat chastened mind. Wages were going up and men were in demand and he found little trouble in securing work at good wages. With frugal industry he might easily have gotten a fair start financially, but no work seemed to suit him. In some cases the work was too hard or not of a kind he cared to

do; in others he found fault with his employers or those with whom he worked.

Leroy was of the type of young men who, without being exactly slothful, are inherently lazy, and are smart without being intelligent. With high class environment and good advice, he might have been guided past the pitfalls of early manhood, and what real ambition he possessed nurtured and directed in such a way that he would have been at least a moderate success, as the world usually looks upon it. It was unfortunate for him as well as Macel that they met when they did. Both were too young to realize the seriousness of marriage and were probably not in love with each other as they thought they were. It was only the call of sex to sex and the attraction of youth to beauty, and Leroy, confronted with the responsibilities of married life which soon lost its glamour, was not equal to the restrictions it imposed.

But taking it all in all, he did fairly well and Macel was almost happy, but other clouds were gathering and Macel Morrison, though she little dreamed of it, was yet to pass through another "Valley of the shadow" and pray in another Gethsemane.

Chapter XVI

War

"Oh! blest who in the battle dies.
God will enshrine him in the skies."

* * * * *

The spring of 1917 opened in a National turmoil only second to the international disaster. The rain of lead and blood which had for two years deluged all Europe was reaching its skeleton hand across the Atlantic and fastening its fingers on the best of our manhood and resources.

German duplicity and intrigue had aroused the wrath of a sleeping nation and the sinking of the Lusitania almost severed the last thread of diplomacy. President Wilson, who had side stepped many gigantic problems, found that we could no longer pose as the great peace-making nation of the world, or as one that was too proud to fight. It was therefore, no great surprise when in April war was declared. This meant that America could no longer simply *finance a European* war, it must *fight* it as well.

John Scott at once telegraphed his representative in Congress his readiness for action and

went home to break the news to his aged father, whom he felt sure would hardly live until his return. The news was never broken, for on his arrival he found Thomas Scott so hopelessly stricken with paralysis that he never spoke again. Dr. Johnson, who soon came, watched with John throughout the night but in early dawn the spirit took its flight, and reposed once again in the bosom of the God who gave it,

John buried his father by his mother's side and then with Dr. Johnson, rode slowly home.

For many years these men had been close friends; a friendship based largely on the fact that while they rarely agreed an anything, their arguments usually ended by each being at least half convinced that the other was right. They differed in their religious belief, adhering to different churches. Their fathers had both fought in the Civil War but on opposite sides. They differed widely in politics, and while John could usually be depended upon to deliver his district to the right man of his own party, he often found Dr. Johnson equally as successful in his own. The doctor had been an early and bitter proponent for war, John Scott had opposed it until the die was finally cast. Perhaps

the only point of agreement, if indeed agreement it could be called, was their mutual respect and confidence in each other. If John had been asked to name the most conscientious physician in the state, he would have named Dr. Johnson without hesitation, and the doctor would have been equally quick to name John Scott as the most trustworthy, straightforward man of his acquaintance.

They rode awhile in silence and then the doctor said, "John, you are left pretty much alone now that your father's gone. Will it make any change in your plans?"

"No," answered John, "I wired Washington the day before yesterday offering my services in the war, and urged early consideration."

"Did your father know that?" quickly asked the doctor. He probably thought it might have shocked him and caused his death.

"No," answered John, "He never knew it. It would have been a hard thing for him to have seen me go but I think he would have approved."

"I thought you opposed the war," said the doctor.

"I did," answered John. "Maybe I opposed it too long. If I did it was only because

I knew what it would mean to a million American mothers to see their boys carried across the sea, many of them to be riddled by bullets and torn into shreds by German shells. I knew what it would mean to a million American fathers to see their hopes in old age and their ambitions for future generations disappear beyond the horizon. But I believe the time has now come for us to go into it, and I am going in myself as soon as I can get in."

"You wouldn't have to go, John. They will never draft men of your age," said the doctor.

"I suppose not," answered John." I always had a sort of desire to be a soldier though. I was too young for the Spanish American War and will be too old for the next one, so this seems to be my only chance. I don't like this war very well but it is the best I can do."

"You are determined to go then, are you?" asked the doctor."

"Sure thing," anwered John, "I would break out of jail to go."

"Good boy!" exclaimed the doctor. "I have done the same thing. I have wired the Surgeon-General offering myself in the Medical Corps."

"But what do your wife and the girls say about it?" asked John.

"The girls think it would be fun for me to be a soldier and that I would look cute in a uniform, but the Missus don't look at it just that way, but she is willing for me to go if I want to."

They had by this time reached the forks of the road where they must separate.

"I hope we get to go together," said the doctor.

"So do I," answered John as he waved a goodbye.

The call to Washington came sooner than John had expected, but it gave him twelve days in which to report. He therefore set about to 'put his house in order'. His first act was to arrange for the erection of a monument over his father's grave. The next was to visit the county seat where he gave Judge Williams power of attorney to handle his business in his absence. After that, he made a will in which he provided a small annuity for Harry, his colored man, and directed all the rest of his estate to be divided equally between Miska and her five girls. After doing this, he put in the rest of his time arranging small business details and attending to personal matters. John Scott was going to war, but he was going into it in a

methodical, common sense way. He intended to fight and fight hard, and he also intended to come back alive if possible, but knowing the dangers he would be in, he considered it no more than good business to leave his affairs in proper order.

Finally there was only one more day left for him at home. In the morning he rose early and dressed with considerable care, then giving Harry some instructions, he rode away. He first called at the office of Dr. Johnson at Altoona. The doctor was absent but his wife said the doctor had received assurance that he would be called soon.

"Tell him he will find me waiting for him 'over there'," said John laughingly, but when Mrs. Johnson tried to laugh also, her face was rigid. War meant more to her than rage against Germany.

John's next call was at the home of Henry and the fair haired girl who had once jilted him. Here he learned that their financial troubles had all been smoothed out. Everything was paid, their home secure, and there was some money still. Clara prepared an early dinner just to show John she could still cook as well as when she was a girl. Soon after dinner John pre-

pared to take his leave and then he told them he had destroyed the note Clara gave him and that they would never have it to pay.

"But we want to pay," they both declared.

"I want you to pay it too," answered John Scott, "and as I'm leaving for the war tomorrow, I'll tell you how I want you to pay me. I want you to live in peace and comfort, thanking the Lord each day for each other. If you will promise to do this, the debt is paid, whether I ever come back or not."

"We will do it," they promised, "and pray that you come back safe." And John rode away feeling well satisfied.

After he had disappeared, Henry took Clara in his arms and said, "What a mistake you made when you turned down John for me."

But Clara was a woman and her answer was typical of her sex for she answered, "Oh, I don't know, Henry, you are good enough for me," which was very true. It is to be hoped they kept their promise to John but since, childless, they live alone, there is no one to give information.

John now rode directly and rapidly in the direction of the Sang Run road. He had a half matured plan and wanted to see Leroy and

Macel. Finally reaching the house that Leroy had built and in which they still lived, he saw no signs of life. Weeds, briers and brush were starting new growths with little danger it appeared of being disturbed. But the door was open and John Scott approached it. Within was Macel sitting alone, her hands clasped in her lap, her eyes staring almost vacantly at nothing. John took off his hat and spoke to her.

"Come in, John," she said, "I was not expecting you. I thought you were going to the war," and getting up she shook hands with him.

"I am, in the morning," answered John, "but I came over to see you and Leroy. I am leaving Harry to take care of things but he will have more than he can do. I came over this afternoon to propose that you and Leroy move into my house. You will find plenty of everything there and I thought you could keep house and Leroy and Harry could look after the farm. I will pay Leroy wages and give him a share besides."

"That's mighty good of you, John," Macel answered, "but it won't do. I am not going to be able to do much work, and Leroy—you can't depend on him. He has gone back on his

religion and swears worse than ever, and when I told him that I believed I was going to have another baby he nearly went crazy. He stamped and cursed and vowed he would leave me, and when I tried to tell him it was his own fault, he called me all the dirty names he could think of and slapped me in the face. He even accused me of enticing him into a marriage and ruining him, and said he could now be somewhere else having a good time if he were not tied to me. Oh! my dear, good friend, what am I to do?"

John Scott was a man of careful judgment and immense will-power, but the next few minutes witnessed a fiercer conflict than he had experienced since when, almost a boy, he had in his rage stamped his hat into the ground and torn his shirt into shreds, and mature man though he was now, he came near losing the battle against his impulses.

The thoughts that flashed through his mind were: here is a girl not yet twenty years old, beautiful, talented and ambitious. She has made a mistake in judgment but is innocent of any moral wrong. She is married to a scoundrel that wants to get rid of her. I half believe I loved her. I know now I could love her

yet. She has been damaged, but not beyond repair. Let her take Leroy at his word and leave him. I have money and can put her under the care of the best physicians in the finest hospitals. She can be cured, then she will blossom as a rose. Health, beauty, happiness and culture shall be hers. All this I can do for her and she will love me devotedly in return. Then when I come back from war, the girl that Leroy Morrison has despoiled will be queen of the mountains.

The vision was an enticing one and the temptation was great, but in the end he only said, "I don't know; I don't know."

They talked much longer and Macel bared her breast and shoulders and showed him the scaly half pitted sores and the copper colored bloches. But still John Scott could only clinch his fists, opening and closing his fingers. Finally, putting his hand into his pocket, he withdrew some money, saying, "Macel, I want you to go to the county seat and see Dr. Bears. I will write him myself. We will have to get you under his treatment. He is very expert. It will be a painful method, but it is the only way. I am leaving now and may or may not return. I want you to take this money and use it for treat-

ment, or if necessary, for other emergencies." As she hesitated, he pressed it into her hand, and saying, "Keep your nerve, Macel," he rode away.

After he was out of sight, Macel looked at the money and saw that there was one hundred dollars. She would not have taken it if she had known there was so much, and she wondered if there was any way to keep the knowledge from Leroy. She had no fear that he would object, but knew that he would spend the money himself if he got a chance.

John stopped and talked to Samuel Adams just long enough to tell him what he knew of Macel's condition, and found that both Mr. Adams and his wife were aware of it. Mr. Adams promised to see that she had proper opportunity and conveyance to visit the County Seat and take treatment of Dr. Bears.

It was late in the afternoon when John reached the home of Miska Brown. He did not remain long, but told Miska how he had arranged his business and gave her some instructions and advice, promising to write often. He then bade them an affectionate goodbye, embracing and kissing each in turn. It was the first time he had touched Miska's lips for nearly twenty years.

He then rode to the cemetery where he bade goodbye to his father and mother, carefully transplanting a bunch of white violets on the grave of each.

At midnight, with Harry to bring his horse back, he started to the County Seat to take the train for Washington, where two days later he was sworn into the Federal Service.

* * * * *

Chapter XVII

On Land and Sea

"When we are asked—
'What did you then when all the world was red?
And some shall say—
'I fell in France' and some 'I mourned my dead'."

* * * * *

After John Scott's induction into the service he was given a few days in Washington before being definitely assigned to any camp or division. His first call was at the office of Senator Sutherland of his own state of West Virginia. The Senator was a man of the people, dignified as occasion demanded, but always glad to see

and, if possible, do a favor for "the fellows back home." He and John Scott had long been close friends, had ridden the mountains together, and in many a campaign had slept together in the same bed at many small hotels or farm houses.

Their greeting in the Senator's office that morning was characteristic. It was "Hello, John!" and "How are you, Howard?"

"Well, John," said the Senator after shaking hands warmly, "It looks like our coon and fox hunting on Cheat Mountain will have to be postponed this winter, don't it?"

"I'll be hunting foxes of different stripe, I guess," answered John. "If they let me get over in time, I hope to get a few German pelts,"

John and Senator Sutherland talked for some time; finally the Senator said, "John, a man of your training and ability cannot afford to go into the war as a private. You must have a commission."

"It makes no difference about the commission," answered John Scott. "I care nothing about the pay or the honor of a commission, I just want to get into the service. If every man like me wanted a commission before he was willing to fight I'm afraid there would be more officers than men in the army. I am willing to

'do my bit' anywhere they need me, just so it is close up to the big noise."

"That's all right," answered the Senator, "but suppose we go up and see Secretary Baker about it."

Secretary Baker was a native of the West Virginia hills also. Senator Sutherland introduced John to the Secretary of War, saying, "Here, Newt, is another sample of West Virginia brawn and brains."

"And buckwheat," added the Secretary smiling.

"We raise buckwheat too," answered the Senator, "but there is nothing that's green about John Scott."

After talking the matter over, the Secretary said that the Senator should have brought John around before he had enlisted but that he thought things could be arranged. John and Senator Sutherland then took their leave, one to do his part in helping to guide the Ship of State through the thickening fogs of international disorder; the other to return to his hotel and write a letter to Miska, whom he knew would be anxiously awaiting it.

John did not return to his hotel at once, however, but walked along the streets watching the

new activities and observing the serious look on the faces of all he passed. He finally strayed into Lafayette Park and seating himself, gazed for a long time at the windows of the White House behind which must lay secrets little suspected. The soft whir of an airplane and the diamond point of the Washington Monument each attracted his attention for awhile, and the regular tread of a company of blue jacketed marines marching up Fifteenth Street aroused his envy. It was a "far cry" from the mountain peaks of West Virginia to the swampy valley of the Rhine, but John Scott was on his way.

John's stay in Washington was very short and his training camp experience brief and intensive. General Pershing had already gone to France to be followed soon by a contingent of Regulars. The Germans seemed determined to make an effective strike and win the war before America could get in and when in July the first small contingent of enlisted men were ordered to follow, John Scott in the uniform of a First Lieutenant with a silver bar upon his shoulder, was among them.

The man on horseback with leggings and spurs, from among the West Virginia hills was no longer a man of the mountains, but a distin-

guished looking officer of the great American Army going forth to fight in a cause that was greater still. If John felt any reluctance or regret he did not express it. No weeping mother had been left behind, no father's blessings or encouragement had followed him, no sister's love had been assured him and no brother's fireside would miss him. Family of his own he had none, but though alone in the world, John Scott was not without friends and there were those whose love and blessing he knew followed him.

Henry and Clara, sitting before an empty fireplace around which seemed to flit visions of children which were never born, were each in their hearts thinking of better days in store for them and of John Scott. Macel Morrison, with a new and inspiring vision of life, had determined to reconstruct her shattered ambitions and to be worthy of John Scott. Miska and her children, kneeling nightly around their family altar, prayed for his safe deliverance, and even the youngest begged, "Oh! dear Lord, bring Daddy Johnsy back safe." And who knows, it may be that in the Spirit Land there were loving eyes following him and that sainted hands were leading him.

It may just as well be understood now, that John Scott did not win the war. There were many thousands, perhaps millions of men like him, some of whom sacrificed more than he did, and fought with equal valor. To all these patriotic men and the noble women who were equally willing to risk fire and shell abroad and forego many comforts of life at home we can never do too much honor. This, however, is a story of one man who is only a type of others, of many others who in the Great World War stretched forth their hands and bared their breasts to danger in a righteous cause.

All over our broad land clocks had been set foward to lengthen time, and men who had thought their working days over, were found toiling early and late in their efforts to feed and maintain our army "over there".

Patriotic women like Mrs. Johnson at Altoona had sent their husbands, fathers, brothers and sweethearts to war, and others were waiting for the call.

To all of these we owe a debt of gratitude that can never be paid by human effort. This little reminder is being injected here "Lest we forget, lest we forget."

The transport on which John Scott was car-

ried to England slipped quietly out of New York Harbor late at night. German submarines were supposed to be patroling the seas and every effort was made to prevent knowledge of the sailing. As further protection, lookouts and submarine chasers accompanied the ship across the water. Gray dawn found them well out from land, and standing on the deck John had watched the dim form of the Statute of Liberty disappear before sunrise. He then retired to his berth and slept soundly for several hours, as the hurried and excessive labor of the past two days had been very exhausting.

Coming on deck in the afternoon, he was surprised to meet a kindly faced, jovial man of little more than middle age, in civilian clothes. The man greeted John with a smile and introduced himself as William W. Worthington of Pittsburgh, and explained his presence on the transport as being due to the fact that he, as a member of a firm that had large contracts with the Government to supply war material, had been allowed passage to England on the army transport. He also informed John that his daughter Clare was along, that she was going over on the transport in order to be with him

on the trip. It seemed that she was being sent ahead to arrange Red Cross accomodations for a unit that was soon to follow. John found Mr. Worthington a very interesting man and soon discovered that he was very wealthy. As they parted, Mr. Worthington said, "I am glad we have met, Lieutenant. I hope to see you on deck again tomorrow."

The following day, after looking after the few official duties required of him, John again went on deck where he found Mr. Worthington and his daughter, to whom he was at once introduced. A very pleasant hour was spent in general conversation, after which Miss Worthington withdrew and left the two men to themselves.

"Clare is my only daughter," said Mr. Worthington, "and nothing would do for her but to get into this Red Cross work. Two of her brothers are now in Plattsburg and will come over later, I suppose."

"Have you other children?" asked John.

"Yes," answered Mr. Worthington, "I have one other son who is married and has charge of the business at home."

"Your daughter appears to be a very capable girl," said John.

"She is," answered Mr. Worthington. "She knows about as much about the steel business as I do."

He then very adroitly directed the conversation into other business channels, finally asking point blank what business John was engaged in before going into service. John's hesitation in answering was only momentary, but in that instant it had flashed through his mind that here was a very wealthy man of high standing in his city, who had an only daughter who is educated and refined and must move in the very best of society, a clean, high bred American girl with red blood in her veins and healthy muscles on her bones. That they were interested in him and would accept him as a social equal he had no doubt. He knew, however, that the attraction of an officer's uniform counted for much more then than it would later, and that all soldiers were being almost idolized.

Smiling, John said, "I am hardly in business at all, Mr. Worthington, in comparison with you big men." He then frankly and truthfully told something of his life's history, of his ambitious efforts and partial success, finally saying, "I have made some money, not a great deal, of coure, but I own some coal lands that may be valuable some day."

Mr. Worthington seemed much interested in that and asked in detail where John's holdings lay, and drawing a small map of West Virginia from his pocket, made careful note of the locations John mentioned, saying, "I may be in that section before you return, Lieutenant Scott, and it may be that we can be helpful to each other some time in handling these lands. By the way, who is a reliable attorney up there?" John named Judge Williams, and Mr. Worthington was astute enough to assume that the Judge was probably John's personal representative.

That night Mr. Worthington asked Clare what she thoubht of Lieutenant Scott and she answered, "I think he is an unusually high class man, father. What do you think of him?"

"I think," answered her father, "that he is the rarest of American birds; a self made man who has not been spoiled in the making, and does not worship at the feet of his maker. If the Germans don't get him, Clare, he will have to be reckoned with in the business world some day and that day may not be so far off. Why, Clare, if his statements are correct, he has gradually and at a very low price acquired a string of coal lands in the West Virginia hills

that cuts the holdings of our company in two. I knew we needed some connecting links up there but supposed they still belonged to some hard up farmers that would be glad to sell cheap most any time. I have a very high regard for our Lieutenant Scott, Clare."

"I am glad he owns it and that you like him," answered Clare. "I rather like him myself."

"Suffering cats!" exclaimed Mr. Worthington, "Ain't that going pretty fast for a confirmed man hater. Love at first sight, aye?"

"Nothing doing in that line, father," answered Clare, "not yet, but I'll tell you one thing, when that great event happens to me, he'll have to be a man something like Lieutenant Scott."

To this Mr. Worthington only made answer by a grunt. It is proper to say that Bill Worthington or "Old W. W." as his friends called him, had originally come from the Pennsylvania mountains and had worked his way up to wealth and power. He was still very much at heart the raw mountaineer of earlier days and could appreciate and set the real value on a man like John Scott. He considered Clare a "chip off the old block" and while he supposed she would marry some man some day, he had

never yet seen the man he would be willing to let have her. He now realized that she was right, that it would have to be a real man "something like Lieutenant Scott."

The trip over was soon made, and while John was compelled to spend much time with his men who literally covered the ship like bees, leaving little time for social activities, he spent many hours with his new friends, and when the coast of England came in sight and Mr. Worthington and Clare bade him good bye, John Scott knew that they were his friends and not the casual acquaintances of an ocean voyage. None of them knew at that time where John would be sent, but they gave him an address in London where they could be found, and Mr. Worthington told John that when he had "whipped the Kaiser" he would expect to see him in Pittsburgh.

John remained in England some three weeks before crossing the channel, and took occasion to look them up, and spent many a pleasant hour with Mr. Worthington and happy ones with Clare, who exacted a promise from him to write to her, promising him all the news in return. John gallantly responded by hoping that if he were wounded he would be sent to her Red Cross hospital to be nursed.

Let us not presume too much and conclude that John Scott and Clare Worthington were in love with each other, for they were not; but each had recognized true worth and admired it. If he was a man in a thousand, she a woman in ten thousand. It may be that fate had brought them together for some noble purpose, and yet it may be that this was only another "ship passing in the night", or one of the pleasant incidents that make life better and more real. Nor must it be thought that John Scott was fickle minded or unable to truly interpret the findings of his own heart. He had met many women, but had paid court to few. He had truly loved one girl in his youth, but that was only a memory. He had looked with admiration and possible love on Macel Adams, but she had given herself to a less worthy man. The future now was in the hands of the Gods of War and with a determination to do his part and do it well, he crossed the channel and joined the army of General Pershing from where he went forth to meet the Hun.

Chapter XVIII

The Sins of the Parents.

"Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation."

Numbers—14th Chapter, 18th Verse.

* * * * *

As has been said, whatever may have been the suffering and hardships of those who carried the flag across the sea, and too much cannot be said in praise of them, we cannot in this story overlook or belittle those of our countrymen who remained at home and administered to the wants of civil life.

Dr. Johnson was gone. His cheery voice and the clatter of his horse's hoofs were no longer heard in the village and among the mountains. His yellow mule quietly grazed in the pasture and his saddle bags lay covered with dust in his office. His careful wife shrewdly collected all his outstanding accounts that she could, and freely handed out calomel and headache tablets to those who came for them. But the doctor was sadly missed and like many less useful citizens, was better appreciated in his absence.

"How blessings brighten as they take their flight."

Miska and the children were well and happy but in a state of constant anxiety, and always looking forward from day to day to getting a letter from John, but living in constant terror lest the news would not come from him but from those who lived to tell it. The girls were growing amazingly and Miska was very little larger than Mistie, and looked much too young to be her mother.

Years before, with arms clasped about each other and on bended knees, Fred and Miska Brown had erected a family altar before which they offered thanks for a friend like John Scott. Now Miska and her children around this same altar nightly prayed for the absent one and that God would bring him safely back to them. Nor were they the only ones who missed his presence. Pincher, the dog of many canine strains, lay in his corner disconsolate, and many times when an outside noise evidenced the approach of some one, his eyes would brighten and his tail wag, but both dropped with disappointment when the visitor appeared.

Miska and her children were happy but it was the happiness of those who do their duty and

meet life bravely. But a shadow was always over them when they talked in whispers of Daddy Johnsy.

With Macel and Leroy things were very different. It is true Leroy had worked fairly well through the summer and had shown Macel some kindness at times, for it must be remembered that he was not wholly bad. No doubt there are many people, well respected people, holding high stations in life and enjoying the confidence and love of their families, who have made much less effort to be decent and honest than Leroy Morrison.

John Scott in one of his public talks had once said, that he believed there was "stock" in people just as in hogs and horses; that he believed inherited tendencies and traits of character cling to the child and are as much of him as the color of the eyes, hair or skin. He pointed out that hybrids are produced and unexpected types gotten by the crossing of parents of different physical characteristics and temperament. It is a known fact that the American turkey in domestic life is as tame as any other barnyard fowl from the moment it emerges from the egg shell, while its far distant cousin hatched from an egg found among the mountains, will run

and hide among the leaves on the approach of any person or noise. Inherited memory, usually called instinct, but however, inherited.

Most of us have impulses to act and to do certain things, sometimes unaccountably. We are governed by desires we have never ourselves cultivated; inherited no doubt from parents or grandparents, or they may possibly be the hybrid result of the mating of people whose inherent characteristics are widely opposite but very positive.

It is probable that Leroy Morrison could no more change the underlying principles of his mind or the innate desires of his heart, than he could change the color of his eyes or the shape of his nose. What he possibly could have done was to cultivate such a kindly, honest disposition that his eyes would reflect what he was trying to be, and people would be so impressed with the honesty and sincerity of the man that they would overlook the fact the nose was either large or small. He must have been genuinely converted to religion for he "came through bright", and was faithful to his devotions and church duties for a while, but inherent tendencies were too strong for ordinary temptations, and that which was dyed in the

heart and bred in the bone could not long remain in subjection unless controlled by a stronger will than his.

Be all this as it may, Leroy could not or at least did not, stand firm against temptation and proved to be what Squire Bailey termed a "cold weather christian", meaning that as long as winter lasted and revival meetings were in progress, such people were very enthusiastic in praising the Lord, but with the coming of Spring and more worldly matters to claim their attention, they soon lapsed into the old ways. Squire Bailey was not always too careful when and where he expressed his opinions, and the mountaineers still smile at remembrance of his prayer at the old Rock Camp Church on a certain night. There was a family in the neighborhood by the name of Wence, which, with all its members, had habitually gone forward to the "Mourners' Bench" with the regularity of the winter's revival, and with equal confidence, the minister could always count ahead on at least as many converts as there were members of the family, for they never failed to backslide promptly with the coming of spring.

On this night of the revival meeting the whole Wence family were gloriously converted and

hilariously shouted all over the church. Thinking to quiet them somewhat, the minister called out in a loud voice, "Squire Bailey, will you lead us in prayer?"

In the course of his prayer Mr. Bailey said, "Now, Oh Lord, here is this Wence family again. Time after time and year after year we have all seen them converted and brought into the fold, but only to backslide and fall again into sin. But now, Oh Lord, if it pleases thy righteous will, wilt thou take them all to thyself, and do it quick before they backslide again and all go to hell."

Leroy Morrison was indeed a cold weather Christian, and the unclean spirit of which our Savior speaks, "and the last state of that man is worse than his first", had nothing on him, or at least that is the way Squire Bailey expressed it. And the Squire was not a bad judge, for no less a personage than John Scott had expressed the opinion that had the Squire been an educated man and lived in a land of great opportunities, the world would have had to reckon with him, and John himself was very careful to keep the friendship and respect of the Squire.

As winter came on, Macel was again face to

face with the grim reality that had once been only a dream. "Running sores on the body, dead babies, etc." were no longer fanciful dreams, but grim experiences.

Leroy was sullen and defiant, for strangely enough he had escaped the ravages of the disease to a great extent, as is sometimes the case, and as is nearly always true, "it is the woman that pays".

In Macel's second sickness, it was necessary to get a doctor from Centerville as Dr. Johnson had gone into the army, but the new doctor was competent and very kind. He had been told the history of her previous troubles and was prepared to meet any unexpected turn the case might take.

The reader will be spared the history of this second night of travail. Macel was weak but courageous; and when it was all over, she had the joyful knowledge that her baby was alive and would probably live. The thing she did not know then, a knowledge which was mercifully reserved until she had more strength to bear it, was that the baby was blind and would never walk.

Some who read this story will no doubt accuse the author of hardness of heart and lack

of mercy in thus imposing upon innocents and unborn babies lives of such misfortune and even helplessness that a few cold words of print might avoid. He can defend himself only by reminding you that this story would not be a story at all were it not true, and were it written otherwise than it is it would not be true.

Dr. Johnson was not a prophet, but a wise man who knew scientific causes and pathological as well as physiological results. "The wages of sin is death", "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap", "Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generations", are not only Bible truths, but statements of profound and irrefutable scientific facts.

Macel's baby was doomed to blindness and partial paralysis although innocent of any wrong. Macel herself had suffered and must still suffer for sins she had not committed, but each of them had come in contact with the irresistable force of perverted natural laws and had been crushed by the impact.

After the birth of this second child, Leroy had not shown so much consideration and tenderness for Macel as before, but did for a time seem proud that the baby was a boy, but when

he found that the child was defective in body if not really in mind, he threw off the slight smear of consideration and parental love he had maintained and cursed both Macel and the child, never for an instant taking any blame upon himself. He almost daily consigned them both to the lower regions and even threatened to send them there. Macel finally told her father about his actions and threats, and Samuel Adams decided it was time to take a hand in matters himself; and he did take matters in hand to the extent of telling Leroy just what brand of scoundrel he really was, and when he had finished his severe arraignment, Leroy was literally flung aside as a "dirty rag" and branded as an "unclean thing". From that time on Leroy was at least more moderate in his language for he knew that Samuel Adams could and would, if he went too far, break every bone in his body.

But Samuel Adams was saved the trouble of taking the law into his own hands, for early in the spring and soon after it became evident the child would never use its limbs, it did its part in paving the way for Macel's future. It suddenly and very mercifully died.

After the baby was buried and Leroy and

Macel had returned to their home, Leroy said, and not unkindly, "Macel, I think now would be a good time to make some plans for our future; it seems we have made a mess of things so far, and I am willing to take my share of the blame and start all over in any way you say."

Macel was half tempted to throw her arms around his neck and tell him she still loved him, and was willing to continue to sacrifice herself for him and bear what might come, but her old ambitions rose up in her mind and her heart rebelled at the thought of what she had passed through, and she felt she could never endure it again.

Finally she made her decision and with a determination to stand by it, she said, "Leroy, am going to take you at your word and start over again in the way I think is best. Our married life has been a failure. I have suffered from it more than you. We may or may not have been in love with each other, I am not sure, but this I know now that the baby is dead, there is nothing holding us together. I will go to my father this evening and you can go to your own people. A divorce can be easily arranged, I am sure. We will speak no ill of each other, but quietly and without malice, go our own way."

Macel rather expected, probably half hoped that Leroy would protest, but instead he only walked out of the house and stood for a few minutes before the door, then turning around, said, "Macel, this is a relief to me. I feel the same way about it but was afraid you would not agree. It is the only thing for us to do. We jumped into marriage without counting costs. Most of our failures are probably my fault. Anyhow, I agree with you."

And so it happened that an hour later, Leroy with his belongings packed into a suit case, left Macel at her father's gate and went on alone to fight such battles as might confront him and overcome such temptations as might beset him.

Macel entered her father's house and going directly to her mother, threw her arms around her neck and unburdened her heart on her mother's breast.

That night Samuel Adams and his family sat late in consultation but it was finally settled as Macel had hoped it would be, that she would go at once to Dr. Bears at the County Seat where she could have the most scientific medical treatment possible, and while waiting for a decree of separation from Leroy, would enter

training as a nurse in Dr. Bears' private hospital.

And thus the reconstruction of a human life was planned and eventually carried out.

* * * * *

Chapter XIX

In France

"Here's to the boys of the sun-kissed South
As they met on the fields of France,
For the spirit of Lee was with them all
As the boys in the gray advanced.

And here's to the boys of the wind-swept North
When they met on the fields of France,
For the spirit of Grant was with them all
As the boys in the blue advanced.

But here's to the blue and the gray as one
When they met on the fields of France,
For the spirit of God was with them all
When the sons of the flag advanced."

* * * * *

When John Scott arrived in France he was assigned to a detachment in a French village

surrounded by a rolling country in which the ripening harvests were being gathered by old men, women and children who were all who were left to do the work, for the sons were at the front.

The whole country was a revelation to John. He had supposed he would at once be ushered into a shell torn country, deeply pitted by former battles and destitute of any growing thing. Instead, he found red tiled houses in tiny villages in the midst of which rose some tall church towers; and the country around speckled with growing grain, waving forests and sparkling streams. But the sound of a gun from the training camp and a bugle call from a field nearby reminded him that somewhere near, there was war.

From John's headquarters in a brown army tent he had an opportunity to see, what appeared to him, the whole world go by. They were there from the south, along the Mexican border and from Maryland and Virginia. Most of the First Division, however, were from the Middle West with a few detailed men from the regular army. John's contingent was being drilled as rapidly as possible to take its place in relief of the war shattered and hard pressed

French. He found the work very intensive. Bugle call at 5 o'clock in the morning, breakfast at 5:30 and at 7 A. M. all were on the drill ground, ready for eight or nine hours of hard work and exercise. As a commissioned officer, John's lot was somewhat easier but he made no effort to shirk anything. He had trained himself to thoroughness all his life and had no idea of being a second rate man now. He successfully passed through the very intensive training that was given all soldiers just before going to the front, and experienced the choking sensations of the deadly gas chambers and other testing experiences, a combination which was dubbed by the soldiers, the "bull ring."

In London John had first realized what war meant when at night he found all windows darkened, railroad trains running almost without light, and street lamps, railroad stations and even the whole coast remained without a spark of light. Here too, he saw a great Zeppelin brought down in flames amid a myriad of searchlights shooting up into the sky. But it was while still in training camp in France that he saw his first aerial battle. A whole fleet of aeroplanes must have traveled all night from Germany, but luckily for the Allies, they had

been discovered by the ever vigilant lookouts although not less than eight thousand feet in air, and no less than twenty aeroplanes awaited them. Suddenly a signal was given and the whole heavens were lighted for miles around. The German crafts were located and kept constantly in the glare of a blinding light. Shrapnel and shell were brought into play from the ground and the battle in the air was on to the death. To John it was a magnificent but terrible sight, but the Allies' planes, by the aid of wireless messages and light signals, had the advantage and soon the whole German fleet was in full retreat toward their own lines. The fight was remarkably short at the camp where John was stationed, but the Germans had other dangers from other allied air forces before their safety was assured.

Soon after this, John's company was ordered forward. It was not intended for them to be placed in the front lines at once, but to be held for emergency support, if such became necessary. It did become necessary very soon, for a whole company of French soldiers were cut to pieces in taking a small German stronghold. It being plain that the enemy would attempt to retake it, John's detachment was ordered to

reinforce it, and thus he was initiated into the hell of noise, blood, mud and death that is called the Great World War.

In coming up from the rear John had observed the sheltered cemeteries of white crosses which mutely told the price already paid. The price in life would of course one day be estimated, but the suffering and awful weight of agony can never be computed or measured. No doubt the impressions made on different people vary widely. To some it was the road of grim reality leading to life or death. To some it may have been only a gamble with stakes of either romance or adventure. But to John Scott, the war was a fiery furnace in which Turkish cruelty, German militarism and Russian autocracy must be burnt to ashes and destroyed. But as to John's impressions of battle, we will use his own words. He had promised Judge Williams that if he got a chance he would write him fully his experience after his first real encounter with the Germans, and the following is taken from his letter written to the Judge from a base hospital several weeks afterward and while recovering from his first wound.

"At first I was thrilled at the unearthly

sounds and mighty forces let loose. I could not sleep at night and lay awake wondering how much destruction it meant. One thing I knew must be true, that the line of men in our front were literally holding their lives in their hands, ready to make the great sacrifice. And as I lay there in my trench looking up into the starry heavens that covers the West Virginia hills, I could not see what was before us, but looking back the way I had come I could see the little strip of hard won land full of shell holes and marked by red lines of human flesh and blood; then hidden guns and numerous moving columns of fresh men getting ready to take the place of those who fell. Further back were moving trains and great arteries of traffic leading to thousands of ships plying the great seas from far lands where millions of workers and suffering hearts were supplying the nations in arms. The whole world seems bent on destruction at the devil's demand, and the brotherhood of man has been resolved into an army of obedient slaves to glut the ambition of kings.

Far in front I can see the outlines of the ridges of death where tomorrow or the next day we will pay a ghastly price for what we

may not even gain. And then ten thousand hells break loose. You feel as if your mind would desert you and your brain burst. Human beings become infernal things in life or scattered remnants of arms, legs or dirty bloody clothes in death. I have seen the man sleeping by my side shot to pieces with a shell and die in agony, but game.

The Germans had machine guns planted about thirty feet apart and were grinding them like horse fiddles. Shells were dropping all around us. The man on my right was shot dead and the one on my left was struck by a bursting shell and blown to pieces, literally disappearing before my eyes. I rolled over and over into another newly made, deeper shell hole, and a moment later was struck by a piece of shell and wounded in the left shoulder. Had it not exploded in almost the opposite direction, I would have been blown into pieces. The Germans continued to bombard us but with my good right hand I dug deeper into the ground and prayed that God would deliver me. I remained there fifteen hours, bleeding and exhausted and without food or water. Finally, our boys routed the Germans and took their trenches and some fellows came along with a stretcher and

found me. I was brought back for first aid and then sent on here to the hospital. My wound has been very painful on account of lack of attention in the start, I suppose, but it was not serious and is now about well. I think I could have gotten out of the shell hole and back to safety myself had I not been afraid of being killed in doing so. Sherman was right—'War is Hell.'

I think I am going to be discharged from the hospital soon and then it will be the same thing over again, I suppose. I have not seen or heard a thing of Dr. Johnson, but I know that he is somewhere in the service. I hope he is having an easier time."

Such was John Scott's own version of his first few months on the fields of France where the sons of the boys in the blue and the sons of the men in the gray, united under a common flag, were fighting not for the survival of the fittest, but to make men fit to survive.

John's wound, while not actually dangerous, kept him disabled for some time as it involved the use of his left arm, but he took advantage of this opportunity to write letters to various friends; to Miska and the girls he wrote the longest one, he knew each of them would want

a few lines directed especially to her. To Senator Sutherland John wrote, "I wish I could tell you men at home in America what our boys are facing over here, what they are suffering and what temptations assail them. The best instruction and equipment are not good enough. You people cannot possibly realize to what a life the boys are coming and the hardships that await them. You can sit down in a comfortable home and have tea served on a white table cloth—the boys in France are living in open tents, often without fire in the bleak winter weather, and living on canned corn beef. The Y. furnishes the only amusement and it is entirely inadequate. It is no wonder the boys get homesick and dissatisfied and fall a prey to the harpies that follow the army or visit the "red light" district of some neighboring town."

John also wrote letters to Mr. Worthington in Pittsburgh and answered several of Clare's which finally reached him, but he did not meet with her at this time, her work was mostly in England and John was in an obscure and easily portable hospital in the South of France. During the latter part of John's stay in the hospital some of his abilities and strong points as

a teacher and public speaker were discovered, and it was proposed and finally arranged that he be transferred for a few weeks to another camp for certain educational work until he was entirely fit for duty.

* * * * *

Chapter XX
Camp Zero.

"All that glitters is not gold,
Often have you heard that told:
Many a man his life hath sold,
But my outside to behold:
Gilded tombs do worms infold,
Had you been as wise as bold,
Young in limbs, in judgment old,
Your answer had not been inscroll'd:
Fare you well; your suit is cold."

* * * * *

The natural tendency of most writers would be to omit this chapter from our story, but this is a story of a portion of the life of a man, and it would be unjust and untrue to all concerned if we did not describe this phase of his war experience.

The place to which John had been detailed was about twenty miles East of Paris and prob-

ably one hundred miles from the front. The camp consisted of several acres of forest surrounded by a high fence of tightly woven barbed wire. While this enclosure was commonly dubbed "Camp Zero," it was in fact a hospital, for every inmate was a patient. It was not a hospital of whitewashed walls and spotless beds and no whitecapped nurse was there to soothe a fevered delirium or speak consoling words to the discouraged and down hearted.

There were eight hundred men in this hospital, not one of whom was ever allowed beyond the confines of the barbed wire barrier. German prisoners? No, they were prisoners, but prisoners from the American army. Were they wounded on the field of battle? No, very few of them had ever struck a blow or fired a shot in defense of any country or on any field of honor. These men were sick, not from the wounds of battle, not from exposure to storm and mud, but like nearly two hundred thousand other American boys, had fallen before the forces of immorality before meeting the enemy's shot and shell. There were officers there, many of whom came from the wealthiest families of our land; musicians, artists, and

even teachers helped to fill this unique hospital which was only one of many similar ones both in Europe and America.

To this place John Scott was sent, not because he was infected with a venereal disease also, but because it was discovered during his stay in the base hospital that he was a man of learning and experience, quick to think and fluent in speech with such persuasive and convincing power as would make him a valuable instructor in this camp of "patriotic renegades." John was given much literature to study, and several days instruction, and then ordered to Camp Zero to act as Social Hygiene Sergeant until such a time as he was fit to again go to the front.

The work itself was somewhat enticing to him but the conditions themselves were revolting in the extreme. His first meeting was held on the afternoon of his second day in the camp. Eight hundred men picketed by Corporals were gathered under the trees in a natural amphitheatre and seated on the grass. The sight was peculiar and picturesque. Music was furnished by their own improvised orchestra and then Lieutenant Scott was introduced by their Commandant. John then said, "Men, I am

not a physician and am not here to cure you, nor am I a preacher who has come to convert you. Neither am I here to point a finger of scorn at you for your weakness. I am just recovering from a wound received while making a little journey towards Berlin, and am detailed here to try to pound some facts into your heads while the doctors are getting the poison out of your bodies."

Then taking a sheet of paper from his pocket, he read a communication from Marshall Foch which declared that sixty thousand able bodied soldiers available at a certain critical point would at that time certainly turn the tide of war and ultimately insure Allied victory. But there was no such number available and none who could, with any degree of safety, be transferred from other fronts.

"This means," said John, "that we need sixty thousand men right now to win the war and do not have them, while scattered around over France are camps like this in which nearly two hundred thousand men are suffering from a disability which they brought on themselves in violation of the rules of war, and against every instinct of decency and personal welfare. While two hundred million good men

and women are praying for men and guns and when every man is expected to do his duty, we have three times the number needed in this crisis who are sleeping in army cots, eating army grub and requiring army treatment that is denied the boys at the front, but being used for men like you who have never struck a lick for their country or in its defense. It is not that I can do anything to help what has already passed, that I am saying this to you, but because I hope to impress you with the importance of going straight when you get out of here and trying to make up by good conduct and hard fighting what has been lost by your past mistakes. If you must carry scars on your body and rifts in your mind when you return to America, give some brave German the credit for it and not some French traitor in the guise of a rotten prostitute who ought to be courtmartialed and shot."

John remained at Camp Zero lecturing to the men for three weeks. Men were constantly being discharged and others received. Some were rotten with syphilitic sores, others only beginning to show infection, other forms of venereal disease were there, and John found that the average length of stay of each patient

was about eight weeks. It was not hard, therefore, to compute in money and time the great economic loss to the world by this one class of disease alone; and it may be observed as we go by, that the economic loss in time of peace is no less than that of war; and we have only to hark back to the words of Dr. Johnson, as the insidious foe of social purity wormed its way into the valleys and among the hills of West Virginia, or again listen to the heart-broken sobs of Macel Morrison as "ashes to ashes and dust to dust" shut from sight the last of the only child she might ever bear; to turn our minds to the Garden of Eden and know that the serpent no longer crawls upon its belly but walks upright like a man.

During John's three weeks at Camp Zero he became very well acquainted with several of the patients and wishing to get hold of the psychology of the acts which landed them in this camp, invited three of the most intelligent to his tent one night for a conference. The men were expecting to be discharged and again enter active service and John was anxious to know their history and the probable danger of future lapses.

The first of the three young men was a young

minister of the gospel who readily admitted that his excursion into the slums of Paris was entirely a matter of curiosity, that such experiences were forbidden him within reach of his flock, so he went out of curiosity, then again for amusement, and then for the pleasure of it.

"Vice is a monster of such frightful mein,
That to be hated needs but to be seen,
But seen too oft familiar with its face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

This young minister then assured John that he had always gone straight before, adding, "I am engaged to a little girl at home who is as white as snow. What do you think I ought to do about it?"

"Be sure you're cured first," answered John "and then take it up with your God."

The second of the three men was a big strapping fellow who said his home was in Oklahoma, Texas and Alaska. He had fought Greasers in Texas, bored for oil in Oklahoma and panned out gold in Alaska. The dark and deceptive tricks of Old Chinatown in San Francisco were as familiar to him as the quaint old structures of Spanishtown in New Orleans.

He had played many games and had traveled many a pace. He sang, danced and made money, but stoutly declared that his present infected condition would not have happened had he not gotten intoxicated and thrown caution to the winds. This man had always prided himself on being among the first when any big thing came around, to get on the ground quickly and do his share in the first cleaning up. But so far, the only enemy he had fought in France was himself, and his 'shot and shell' had been dispensed by the army doctor, although he had crossed the Channel nearly six months before. This fellow said he expected to get out and at the Germans soon, and then, "Just watch me grow."

The third man proved to be a married man from New Jersey. He had trouble with his wife and while still angry, had joined the army and soon regretted his action, realizing that he was the one who was at fault. It was too late to get out then, and the deadly monotony of camp life made more intense by homesickness, made him an easy victim to the siren of song and dance; and now he was facing the bitterest experience of his life.

When the time came for John's return to

his command, the men arranged a little program in his honor. Of music there was plenty. Hardened and haggard faces relaxed and hundreds of voices joined in the singing of "My Old Kentucky Home," "Moonlight on the Wabash," etc. and then a little group who had gathered on a knoll just to the left and who knew where John had come from and prepared for it, started up "The West Virginia Hills." It was at once taken up by hundred of other voices and soon the whole forest rang with the song that John knew and loved so well. As the words died away, the red headed leader of the improvised orchestra jumped upon a stump and threw both arms high into the air for silence, and then stretching them out with palms down, slowly and softly beat time to the subdued but very distinct refrain:

"Oh! the hills, the beautiful hills,
How I love the West Virginia hills;
If o'er sea or land I roam, oft' I think of happy home,
And my friends among the West Virginia hills."

John Scott was inherently unemotional but

the occasion was one of great intensity. Separated by a great sea and thousands of miles from his native hills, in a strange and dangerous country, wounded and doubtless homesick at heart, the little personal tribute to him as well as the words themselves struck deeply into his heart. He only bowed his head in mute recognition of their good will, and rising, thanked them for their thoughtfulness, saying, "Now, men, I want every man here to raise his hand and repeat after me the following pledge: America, my country, the best and cleanest on earth. When I return I will help make and keep it so."

We want to record here and now that when he received his Captaincy and was presented with the double bars of a few months later, it was not because of any recommendation for bravery or coolness displayed while under fire, neither was there mentioned any great or distinguished service, although such promotion was easily deserved, but it came through the recommendation of the Commandant of Camp Zero, accompanied by a petition signed by eight hundred outcasts behind the entanglements of a barbed wire fence, every one of whom had

felt and appreciated his influence and would remember him in America—if they did not "go West."

* * * * *

Chapter XXI

In Flanders Fields

"In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our places; and in the sky
The larks still bravely singing fly,
Scarce heard amidst the guns below.

We are the dead.
Short days ago we lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved.
And now we lie in Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe,
To you from falling hands we throw the torch—
Be yours to hold it high;
If ye break faith with us who die,
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields."

When John was transferred to the North, he spent some time at a base camp before receiving the call to the front. Finally the order to "go up the line" came. There were no railroads here and transportation was mostly by motor transports and sometimes a-foot. Large motor trucks loaded with ammunition and supplies were darting ahead and huge tanks were creeping slowly along with big guns in tow.

John's experience had so far been almost entirely with the French soldiers whom he had found to be a serious, determined and rather a close mouthed lot, due to some extent probably because he could not understand their language. Now the English Tommies seemed to be everywhere. Jolly, singing, whistling fellows full of determination but yet of good cheer.

The historic Somme was soon crossed, still vivid with memories of blood and marked by scars of former conflicts. The Belgian border then came in sight and Captain Scott and his company found themselves in Flanders fields. No poppies were now growing in this blood drenched ground, no flaming torch was there to guide them, but the crosses "row on row" gave mute evidence of "those who had gone

before." Torn roofs on ruined houses and dismantled churches, surrounded by deep shell holes and heaps of unused ammunition or bombs, shells and infernal machines, left or destroyed by the Germans' hasty flight and now half buried in the mud, were visible on every side, and gave some idea of the wild confusion which had but recently reigned in this great battle field which now rose in grim reality.

Messines Ridge won at such fearful cost rose before him and the old British trenches blasted, blackened and deep gullied by shot and shell, showed plainly the merciless German fire which the Tommies had so long withstood. Far off to one side was the Ypres salient, skirted by a forest of dead, blackened trees standing stark and leafless, naked sentinels of the dead. John Scott was soon told the history of all these former terrible days and made acquainted with the system of trenches, mines and countermines which had been prepared by the Germans to bar the Allied advance.

The days John Scott spent in this sector before actually engaging with the enemy were long but not monotonous. The air was constantly full of conflict, huge kite balloons, mapping and sketching the enemy's movements,

were constantly in the air. High above these, British planes were darting and dashing here and there, all being legitimate targets for the German aeroplanes which were ever ready to attack. Behind the Allied lines huge hidden guns were ever on the alert for a fusillade at some hapless Hun plane which ventured too far in pnrsuit.

The little Y. M. C. A. dugouts were scattered here and there, and occasionally a Salvation Army lass could be seen returning from the danger zone.

All these things soon became commonplaces to John, and he was anxious to get into the front line, and "do his bit" in its defense, or perhaps lead his company "over the top" in taking some German stronghold.

After John's arrival in the North the old system of trench building was gradually abandoned. The Allies depended on old shell holes and parts of former trenches to conceal them and inaugurated a sort of day and night shift of soldiers to relieve each other. Snipers were placed in advantageous positions and concealed machine guns were ready to spray lead upon every moving thing.

Finally the word was passed along that a

great drive was contemplated and the heavy guns in the rear began to let loose. For six days the air was filled with shrieking shells, more than a million of which went crashing into the German dugouts. The noise was terrific, so terrific that the sound reached across Belgium into Holland, and from France across the Channel into England itself. Aeroplanes dropped thousands of bombs from the air and well laid mines were exploded simultaneously under the ground. Great tanks were ready to grind the German enemy into powder when the moment came, followed by a hundred thousand or more of British and American soldiers.

The order to advance came at last and John Scott at the head of his company pressed forward. The barrage was lifted step by step and fell always a little ahead of them to pulverize and destroy every German left to contest the way. The battle raged one whole day. The struggle was desperate but on the evening of the second day, Captain John Scott, untouched and victorious and with most of his company intact, pitched his tent nine miles nearer Berlin.

Had the Allies at this time had the recruits of the many "Camp Zeros" or the American

shells which were never shipped, this drive could have been continued and the German army driven across the Rhine.

Weeks of inactivity followed and John Scott had become anxious to get into action again, when he was ordered some miles South where the Germans were threatening a drive to the sea. This drive came and came quickly. So fierce, in fact, was the onslaught that it appeared at first that they would accomplish that end. John was in the thick of it. On a front of many miles the Germans leaped from their trenches inside of thirty minutes after their barrage started. Whole regiments on both sides were cut to pieces. John's Colonel was shot through the heart and fell dead with two men on top of him. The whole regiment of nearly one thousand men could muster less than one hundred after the battle. John, himself, fought and gave way and fought again for sixteen hours. Then falling with a shattered thigh, he crawled on his hands and one knee for more than a mile back to a dressing station. The Germans, whose loss was still greater, were finally checked, and John Scott, whose fighting days were apparently over, was fighting still another battle in a base hospital;

a battle with nature and with army surgeons to save both his life and his leg. The war must be won, would be won, but the man on horse back from the West Virginia hills could not fight; nay, he might even never ride again.

For many days and nights John lay in the base hospital suffering intensely. He refused all opiates and pluckily determined to fight it out with a clear mind. A hip joint amputation had been decided upon, and even the ether cone placed over his nose, but John protested and even showed anger, finally knocking both the cone and can of ether to the floor with his fist. He was then let alone for some days but the infected wound got worse.

It was about this time that Clare Worthington in London saw his name among the seriously wounded and crossed at once to France in search of him. He was finally located and she came to him in the darkest hour of his distress. She had left him in London, a magnificent soldier, tall, sturdy and upstanding. She found him a pale, hollow eyed shadow and almost helpless from suffering. He had appreciated the great kindness of the Red Cross nurses who had attended him, he knew they had done their best, but the fight seemed a losing one.

If he expected any display of pity or possible affection from Clare, he was disappointed; he probably did not understand her so well as he did later. She greeted him as a friend, simply saying she had heard of his misfortune and came to see what could be done. And in doing this she lost no time, for within an hour she had a full history of his case as completely as the doctors and nurses and John himself could give it, and within another hour had arranged for his immediate transfer to London. Of that trip to the great private hospital in London to which Clare was taking him, John knew very little, for from her hands he had taken the first opiates he had ever experienced, and only then because she told him it was absolutely necessary and that she would remain with him every minute.

Clare Worthington may have loved John Scott or she may not, it is her own secret, but she was a daughter of "Old W. W." and a "chip off the old block" and she saw at once the necessity for immediate and heroic action. It was not a time for sentiment but for serious business if John Scott's leg or even his life was to be saved. Every minute was of untold value and Clare knew how to use them.

In the great hospital no time was lost either, for W. W. Worthington and his daughter Clare were well known powers in the world of finance and charity and John Scott was now to have his chance. The most eminent surgeons of the city were called into consultation and soon John was informed that an operation was imperative. "We will save your leg if we can" they promised him.

John then asked to consult Clare privately. When left alone, he said, "Clare, what do you think? What are they going to do? Are they just going to cut my leg off?" He looked so boyish, so helpless and so utterly discouraged that Clare could no longer restrain herself and falling on her knees by the bed and kissing him on the lips, gave way to her emotions.

After a while she said, "John, I will tell you the truth. They will have to split your thigh open and remove the dead pieces of bone. If there is any chance to graft bones in their places it will be done, otherwise it is amputation or death. I am going to stay by you every minute of the time and whatever you want, shall be done."

John answered slowly, "I came over here a whole man to fight. I will return the same

way or not at all. Will you see that my wishes are carried out?''

''I will,'' she answered.

The anesthetic was given and his thigh laid open. Bone from another amputation was ready for the grafting, but when the extent of the necrosis was disclosed, the great surgeon shook his head. ''Impossible! Impossible!'' he declared. ''The whole leg will have to come off.''

But Clare Worthington was going to be true to her promise.

''You will graft that bone, Doctor,'' she said. ''Do the best possible job you can. We will take the chances.''

''But it is impossible, Miss Clare. It will never heal,'' he declared.

''Nothing is impossible,'' she answered. ''This is my patient. I am paying the expense. You do just what we want done. If it fails, you are not to blame.''

''Very well,'' answered the Surgeon.

When John awakened some hours later his leg was partly incased in plaster, and a trim nurse was counting his pulse. Clare had gone to bed hoping to get some sleep; she had not slept since landing in France some days before.

The history of John's recovery during the next three months need not be recited here. It is already in print, reported from the hospital records by the surgeon in charge. But the impossible happened. The bone united, the graft grew tight. Not only John's life, but his leg was saved. After the first few weeks he saw very little of Clare Worthington, but she came one day to tell him that she was going on an indefinite trip to Belgium and thought she would soon return to America. She promised to come and see him on her return and he tried to thank her for what she had done. She said she understood and he reluctantly let her go.

Very unexpectedly an opportunity was offered John to return to New York for final treatment and recovery. This he gladly accepted and soon found himself on a hospital ship bound for America.

Before leaving London, however, he paid all hospital bills from his own funds and left a note for Clare explaining his hasty departure.

Chapter XXII

Back in Washington

"The wheel goes round and round,
The ones on top will soon be on the ground.
The ones upon the ground will then be on the top,
The wheel goes round and round and never stops.

* * * * *

When Captain Scott reached New York he wired Senator Sutherland at once asking a request from the War Department for his commitment to the Walter Reed Hospital at Washington for treatment. He felt sure that without such request he would be assigned to some hospital in New York or possibly somewhere in the South or West, and he preferred Washington to any other place.

The request was promptly granted and John was soon on his way to the Capital City.

His wounds were still painful, and after reaching the hospital he was content to remain under quiet and careful treatment until better able to get around. His recovery was very rapid, as is nearly always the case with men

who have inherited clean blood and physical vigor from hardy ancestors and have protected such birthright by temperate and frugal living. The time soon came when he could easily walk about with assurance with a cane, and then followed many days in which he would sit in the Senate gallery at the Capitol and listen to discussions which were of interest to him, chiefly because so many erroneous opinions were expressed and false conclusions drawn. He had been "over there" and knew the real conditions of the war better than any of those who were so eloquent in earnestly proclaiming them. Once or twice he was called before Congressional Committees and questioned closely, where his distinguished appearance and profound grasp of European conditions greatly impressed even the most eminent statesmen.

A little later he was ordered to get ready to accompany a special train that was touring the country with speakers who sought to stimulate subscriptions to Liberty Loans, and being a good public speaker and having spent considerable time in the thickest of the fray, he made a splendid auxiliary to this work. The plain, clean cut statements of this mature looking crippled officer induced many more discreet

citizens to let go their dollars than any amount of hysterical vaporings from those who had never *seen* the Atlantic Ocean, much less *crossed* it.

On his return from this trip his speaking ability was so well recognized that he was asked to address a great mass meeting at the Hall of Nations of the Washington Hotel. Here, sitting on the platform with the Vice President of the United States, three members of the President's Cabinet, and many others of almost equal rank and standing, he could hardly realize that he was actually "the speaker of the evening," as the program stated,—he, a man on horseback riding the West Virginia hills little more than one short year before. He had done the best he could and if we were privileged to revise a well known proverb, we might say: "He who does the best he can does well, acts nobly. Eventually he shall stand before kings."

Soon after this, John was informed that his physical condition would not permit him to hope for another opportunity to fight, although his complete recovery was an assured fact. He at once offered to resign his commission and although he was urged to remain in the service

as a recruiting officer, he declined, saying that he could do as much as an ordinary citizen as he could in this semi-civil service.

Pending the acceptance of his resignation, he was given leave of absence and at once left the hospital and took up quarters at the Washington Hotel for a few days, before paying a visit to the old home in West Virginia. It was while at this hotel that, upon answering the telephone in his room one morning, he heard the unmistakable voice of William Worthington saying, "Is that you, Scott?"

"It certainly is, Mr. Worthington," answered John. "Where are you?"

"I'm in Pittsburgh," answered Mr. Worthington. "Just found out you were in Washington and called you. How long will you be there, and how soon can I see you? It is a business matter."

"I will be here four or five days yet and will be mighty glad to see you any time," answered John. "I am at the Washington."

It was arranged for Mr. Worthington to come to Washington Wednesday night and a meeting was arranged for ten o'clock Thursday morning. John looked forward to this meeting with considerable curiosity for he

could form little idea of what the business could be. It was, therefore, with little surprise that John received a call early Thursday morning from Mr. Worthington inviting him to breakfast and stating that he was accompanied by two of his business associates. The invitation was accepted at once and an hour later he was sitting at a table with Mr. Worthington and another man of about the same age. The fourth man at the table was a much younger man whom John had recognized, almost without an introduction, as Mr. Worthington's elder son.

Mr. Worthington himself was plainly pleased at meeting John again and spent almost the whole time during breakfast in talking of their former meeting, and persisted in calling John "Lieutenant" but occasionally noticing the double bars, corrected himself.

The younger Worthington said very little but he was watching John closely. He had made the trip to Washington largely because his father desired it and not because his presence was very necessary, and for the further reason that he had a curiosity to see what this West Virginia mountaineer, whom his father had talked so much about, was like. Besides,

Clare had mentioned him so often in her letters home.

On leaving the dining room, John said, "Now, gentlemen, it is nearly ten o'clock and if you are ready we will go up to my room and talk business.

"If it suits you just as well, we will go to my room," answered Mr. Worthington. "I have the papers there I wish to use."

"That will be all right," answered John and soon the four men were seated around a table in the large room assigned to the steel and coal baron, who, spreading a map of West Virginia on the table, said, "Our object, Captain Scott, is to propose the purchase of your coal holdings in West Virginia. This map shows just where they are and the amount of acreage in each tract. It also shows lands already owned by us as well as that upon which we hold options. That which we already own is, of course, ours, but the purchases on options depends largely, I may say entirely on whether or not we can make a deal with you."

John studied the map for some minutes, finally saying, "Well, Gentlemen, my property looks very small on the map compared to yours, but it looks like you need mine pretty badly to connect you up."

"That is true," answered Mr. Worthington's older associate, "and under ordinary circumstances we would have tried to purchase your land indirectly and without letting you know its value to us, but we are square dealing men and feel that if you had not been absent, fighting in Europe, you would have had a better knowledge of our plans up there, and we presume you are ignorant of the actual value of what you have. We have no desire to take any advantage of a man who has been fighting for our country and hope you will feel the same way in dealing with us and not demand an unreasonable price."

John looked at this man keenly for a moment. Whether or not this display of honesty was only to get a fair price or even a low price on what they knew to be very necessary to them, or as might actually be the case, an open deal with all cards on the table, was a question. He was inclined to believe the latter deduction correct and asked, "What do you consider a fair price?"

Mr. Worthington answered by naming the price at which they had purchased their present holdings and also the price at which they held leases on other adjacent land.

John then asked, "Just how many acres do you now own and what did it cost you?"

The younger Mr. Worthington soon answered him, placing a tabulation on the table for John's inspection and saying, "Captain Scott, you see we have no desire to cover up and keep any information from you."

Doing some rapid calculation, John looked at Mr. Worthington and said, "Now if you owned my land, your present holdings would be worth at least twice what they are at present, or at any rate, double what you paid besides the increased value of what you have under option. This last, of course, we will entirely leave out of our calculations. But say my holdings would double the worth of what you have now, that would be an increased value of just one half million dollars. Am I not right?"

"I guess you are," answered Mr. Worthington, "but—"

"Hold on," said John smiling, "I'm not going to ask you that much. I believe you have come to me prepared to give me a square deal and expecting the same treatment from me. Now I am going to give it to you. Just give me half of that, or two hundred and fifty thou-

sand dollars and you can have all the coal I own in West Virginia.

In the language of one long since dead, we might say, "Silence reigned supreme" for a moment, which must have seemed much longer to each of the four men sitting around the table. Finally, Mr. Worthington's older associate said, "Captain, is that the only proposition you have to make?"

"It is," answered John, laying his pencil on the table.

The other three men looked at each other and slowly nodded affirmation.

"It's a deal," said Mr. Worthington and opening a leather grip, he took out a package of papers and unfolded them, saying, "We have had men on the ground. Every tract of land has been abstracted and we have here deeds prepared by Judge Williams. All that is necessary is to insert the purchase price and see a notary. This can be done in a very short time if you are ready, Captain Scott."

"I am ready," answered John.

Mr. Worthington, turning to his son, asked, "Did you make our reservations for Pittsburgh tonight?"

"Yes, they are made," he answered.

"Then call the office and tell them to send us a Notary at once," said Mr. Worthington, "and have them to get my residence in Pittsburgh on the line," he added as an apparent after-thought.

The Notary soon arrived and the papers were read carefully and after being signed, were duly acknowledged and a draft for a quarter million dollars passed across the table to Captain Scott.

The ringing of the telephone notified them that Pittsburgh was on the line.

Mr. Worthington answered, "Hello! Mommer, is that you? We have finished our business and are returning tonight."

Then, after another minute of waiting, handed the instrument to John who heard the voice of Clare Worthington saying, "Are you there, Captain Scott?"

"Surest thing you know," answered John. "How are you?"

"Fine," answered Clare. "When are you coming to Pittsburgh?"

"I am in the hands of my friends," John answered. "I will come whenever they say."

"Come soon then," said Clare laughing.

Mr. Worthington, then probably thinking it

a good time to interpose, or "but in" as he more effectively expressed it, took the telephone out of John's hands and barked into the receiver, "Hold on, Clare, he has just skinned me out of a quarter of a million dollars. For the Lord's sake, don't invite him to Pittsburgh, he'll, he'll—"

"Nuff said," laughingly interposed John holding down the receiver and cutting off the connection.

The men then all rose and the younger Mr. Worthington asked, "Well, where do we go from here?"

"Lunch," answered John. "It's on me this time."

After lunch, John visited a bank and deposited his draft and returning to the hotel, invited his visitors up to his own room where he wished to show them a few souvenirs he had brought from France. The remainder of the afternoon was spent in discussing conditions in Europe and America relative to the Great War. Finally, the other men having descended to the lobby, Mr. Worthington drew a folded typewritten paper from his pocket, saying, "Captain Scott, here is a little American souvenir that may be of interest to you."

Taking the paper, John began to read and found that it was a rather detailed account of himself and his life and activities among the mountains.

"Is it interesting?" smilingly asked Mr. Worthington.

"Somewhat interesting," answered John. "How did you get it?"

"When I returned from Europe I sent a man up there to investigate," answered Mr. Worthington. "I knew that if you owned the coal lands you claimed, they were almost indispensable to us. I wanted the facts about them and about you. I knew, of course, that you might never return from France and, since you had told me on the ship that you had made a will before leaving home and that in case of your death, a widow and several minor children would inherit your property, there was a chance for very serious obstructions to a purchase. You see, I wanted to verify what you had told me about the property, and in a sense, verify you as well. Our object, of course, was self protection, looking to the acquisition of your holdings."

John handed the paper back to Mr. Worthington, saying, "It seems your investigations were satisfactory."

"Very satisfactory," answered Mr. Worthington. Otherwise we would have used very different methods and driven a harder bargain with you.

"If I had been killed in France, you would have had great difficulty in acquiring the property from Mrs. Brown and the children," said John. "I have no idea a single foot of it could have been purchased until every child was of legal age."

"Yes," answered Mr. Worthington, "we discussed all these matters and I came very near coming to France to see you myself. However, we kept very close watch of all your movements and were very anxious for your safety."

When John smiled, Mr. Worthington hastened to add, "Oh, it was not the probable financial loss we were afraid of altogether, Captain, we wanted you to return home safely."

"We?" questioned John.

"Clare and I especially," answered Mr. Worthington. "We both enjoyed our short acquaintance and have been looking forward to its renewal."

"When did Miss Worthington return from Europe?" asked John.

"Last week," answered Mr. Worthington.

"That's how we knew where to find you." This was said in a way to indicate that John and Clare were in constant touch with each other, but such was not always the case. It was comparatively easy for Clare Worthington to find out many things about John's movements. She was located at places where mail was delivered daily and sometimes even hourly and bulletins of army movements posted regularly. John's division and company and even John himself, were easy to follow. The exact reverse had been true of Captain Scott. Mail deliveries were infrequent and delayed. Clare was apparently constantly on the move and definite information was either totally lacking or too old to be of service when finally received.

John accompanied Mr. Worthington to the Union Station where he bade the three men good bye and returned to his hotel.

Sitting in his room that night, John Scott spent some time in taking a complete inventory of himself. He thought of his first venture into "high finance" when he had traded a dozen home-made marbles, carefully whittled from mountain soap stone, to another boy for a Barlow knife. And then, after making many more marbles, sold the knife for fifteen cents

in money and tried to acquire another in the same way. This was the first spark of business acumen which had burned and brightened until that day he had, with much less effort, put through a deal that involved a quarter of a million dollars and made him a rich man. He had promised Mr. Worthington to come to Pittsburgh. Washington life was now possible. Many things were within his reach, but more distinctly than all, seemed the call to the West Virginia hills, and in his imagination he could see the smoke-rimmed outlines of the Blue Ridge not so very far away.

Automatically, he reached for the telephone and called for the Union Station.

"Have you a lower on No. 3 for Clarksburg tonight?" he asked.

"The answer was, "No, but we have a compartment."

"Hold it until I get there. This is Captain John Scott speaking, from the Washington Hotel." And for the next few minutes his practical army experience in quick packing was utilized to the limit, and two hours later John was speeding through Tacoma Park towards Harper's Ferry, Cumberland and HOME.

Chapter XXIII

Home Again

"Pledging the same old friendship,
toasting the long ago,
Knowing that nothing can equal
The times we used to know."

* * * * *

Not having received his discharge, John returned to West Virginia in uniform and, being one of the first among our soldiers to come back, he was heralded as something of a hero. The word had reached his friends that he was seriously, perhaps fatally wounded and much concern had been felt on his account.

He was somewhat thinner and rather pale about the lips and eyes. More gray hairs showed about his temples and he still used a cane. When he reached his own county seat, the people were very much surprised at first but lost no time in organizing a big reception in his honor. It must not be supposed that John Scott did not enjoy this, he was very human and while he may have appraised these outbursts of admiration at their true value, he also realized that the people were sincere and

were really his friends; and who can estimate the value of friendship, without it we would all be bankrupt indeed, and with it no man can rightfully be called poor. And who is there among us that would not have taken the apportunity which was open to John Scott for personal advancement and capitalized it for all it would bring.

John met Dr. Bears and found that Macel had come to him for treatment, and soon afterward when all outward trace of her disease had disappeared and no further danger of transmitting it existed, she had entered his hospital for training as a nurse. Dr. Bears spoke very highly of her and said she had secured a divorce from Leroy and assumed her maiden name, being now known as Macel Adams again.

John did not visit the hospital, but went instead to the office of Judge Williams who gave him a detailed account of his business affairs. The Judge then said, "Captain, I hope you haven't seen those Pittsburgh fellows yet. I wanted to see you first. They will pay you a big price for your coal if you hang out for it, but I have been afraid they would waylay you in Washington and cheat you out of it."

"What do you think I ought to ask for it, Judge?" asked John.

"Oh, I don't just know," answered the Judge. "I know you got it all very cheap and bought most of it to help people out of tight places, but that is no reason why you should give it away again. I have an idea those Pittsburgh people will pay you forty or fifty thousand for it, if you hold out."

"Unfortunately, I have already sold," answered John. "They came to see me in Washington."

The lawyer jumped to his feet and threw up his hands. "Holy mackerel!" he exclaimed, "and I suppose you have given it all away. I ought to have had sense enough to warn you."

"I guess I did just about give it to them," said John, and handing the Judge a deposit slip, added "Here's the receipt for the money."

The Judge looked at the paper and almost collapsed. "Telephone for John D. Rockefeller quick," he begged. "I can't read these figures."

After a few days attending to business matters at the county seat, John went to Altoona. He had never seen Dr. Johnson since leaving home, but knew he was in the service and had been sent to France some months later than

John himself. Mrs. Johnson had not heard from him either for some time and was, of course, very uneasy. She had hoped that John could bring some word of him but he could not. He visited some time with Mrs. Johnson and her children but took care to say very little about the hardships and dangers of war. He did not want them to know, but Mrs. Johnson was too shrewd a woman to be deceived.

John had indeed enjoyed the reception that had been tendered him at the County Seat. It showed that the people of his own county held him in very high esteem as a citizen and a returned soldier; but when he entered Fitzsimmons' store at Altoona and found "Wash" and "Bill" and "Joe" and others of his old friends and cronies there, and felt their wholesome outpourings of good feeling and neighborly kindness, given with such generous simplicity, he really began to feel what the wonderful word "Welcome" meant and all it could suggest.

Among these mountain people men grow old very slowly and stay old a long time, for life runs away into the years and customs rarely change. Neither do the usual methods of enjoyment grow stale.

John left his old friends in the village very reluctantly, for Harry, with a broad grin on his black face, was waiting with horse and buggy and John wanted to sleep under his own roof that night. But Harry did not drive directly home. At the forks of the road at the foot of the hill, they turned up the mountain, at the top of which John got out of the buggy telling Harry to turn it around and wait for him. Then opening a gate, he passed into the cemetery. The Arbor Vitae, the weeping willow and even the white violets had withered and died, but the sprig of "Live Forever" he had planted on his mother's grave was green and flourishing. The graves had not been neglected. Other hands besides Harry's had been at work there. With bowed and uncovered head, John stood for a long time at his parents' graves, and when he left them he had made a promise, the fulfillment of which is written in the last chapter of this book.

John found that during his absence Harry had been a faithful and trustworthy servant. Everything was clean and in its place, and alone and most of the time without help, Harry had taken care of John's farms and stock. He had bought and sold as John had directed, but every penny was accounted for.

The following morning John strapped on his spur and carefully mounted his horse and traveled the old familiar road to the home of Miska Brown. He found them much as he had left them, a joyous, crowing brood, but growing rapidly toward young womanhood. Indeed Mistie was really a young woman already, but to all of them he was Daddy Johnsy as of yore. But when the youngest would have climbed upon his lap, the others kept her away, saying, "Daddy Johnsy had been wounded and crippled. You might hurt him." They all kissed him on the mouth, nose and ears and Miska was very happy. She did not tell him how many sleepless nights she had spent thinking of him while he was in France, nor of the agonizing days after she heard that he was probably fatally wounded and could get no word. That, of course, was past and the present was full of joy.

"Well, are you at home to stay?" Miska asked.

"For a short time only," John answered, "but I am done in the Army. I expect my discharge soon."

John spent most of the day with them and recounted much of his experience in France,

finally ending by saying, "But now I am going to settle down for good."

"And get married, I suppose," added Miska smiling. "Have you picked the girl yet?"

"No, not exactly," he answered. "I have been trying to decide all day which one of these girls I want, but they all look too much alike."

John then told Miska that he had sold his coal lands and was a rich man. That he felt that the time had come for him to dispose of his other property and go into business, or at least take up his residence in a better and more convenient part of the state.

"You know, Miska," he added, "if I had died in France you and the children would have been rich. Now I have more money than I need I am not going to offer to divide it with you, but I want to make you and the children a little present. Something that you need and will enjoy. Will you promise to accept it?"

"Yes, John," she answered slowly, "we will."

"Now listen, children," said John. "My present is a winter for you all in Washington. You are to have all the clothes you can wear, good clothes, I mean, an apartment in Washington with all expenses paid. The children

in school, and you, Miska, can spend your time sightseeing, going to shows and being a fine lady."

"Oh, John," answered Miska, "we couldn't do anything like that. I didn't suppose you meant anything of that sort."

"You can and will You have promised, you know," John told her, and in the end he had his way. He explained that he would be in Washington himself until after Christmas and planned to go to Charleston then, his own state Capitol, for the remainder of the winter and be present at the coming session of the Legislature.

"If you will let us go to Charleston instead of Washington," answered Miska, "I will say no more. I would rather spend the winter there with the children."

"All right," said John. "Make it Charleston, then."

John immediately wrote a real estate agent in Charleston to rent a good furnished apartment for the winter, to get it at once no difference what it cost. They then set to work to get rid of their farm stock and in a remarkably short time was ready to lock up the house and start for the Capital city. He

accompanied them to Charleston and saw that they were comfortably settled in their apartment. He then bought a big trunk for each of the girls and put a large sum of money in the Charleston National Bank in Miska's name and told her that when he returned after Christmas, if it had not all been spent for clothes and living, he would consider it a penitentiary offense; but his threats were not needed for a competent seamstress had already been employed and the department stores were beginning to "sit up and take notice."

John then returned to the mountains and again arranged his business so that he could be gone all winter. Harry was again left in charge. It was true that John had first found him in the county jail, but he had proven to be a more faithful steward than many whose skin was white and John never regretted his act.

When he left the mountains this time, he felt that the great crisis of his life was near at hand. He had for twenty years battled for a commanding position in life and having attained it, threw it all into the whirlpool of a world's disaster for his country's sake and almost perished in the melting pot of war. He had dragged himself back through honor to

safety and had made a pledge at his father's and mother's graves that his race should not with him perish from the earth.

* * * *

Chapter XXIV

The Eternal Triangle.

"He either fears his fate too much
Or deserts far too small,
Who will not put it to the touch
And win or lose it all."

The years were passing swiftly. The friends of his youth were becoming the older men of the community. If he were not left stranded on the sand bars of life or a straggler along the highway, he must needs now make haste. He spent many hours in the little room he called his office and drew curious lines on the blank paper before him. He had come to the parting of the ways and there were no guide posts there, and Captain John Scott, wounded and returned hero of the A. E. F., must himself choose the ground for his final campaign.

He now stood in the center of a great triangle

and quick perceptions and in whom ran the blood of William Wallace and Robert Bruce. She had saved his life first and then his body. Life with such a woman. Children by such a mother. What more could any man ask? What greater future could John hope for?

At another corner was Macel, now indeed Macel Adams, once more as pure in heart and in body as any who see God. She had first at one corner of which he saw Clare Worthington, a daughter of wealth but one of good deeds stirred his dormant heart lying under a crust of years. Now regenerated and refined, purified and to him glorified by an experience that, instead of crushing her, had made her strong; a descendant of two Presidents of the United States. Certainly Macel Adams, if given a chance, would not be found wanting.

Finally, Miska Brown and the five little girls. But what's the use, he had always had Miska and of course always would, no matter what happened. She had come to him like the South wind—from nowhere—and like it, had blessed and refreshed everything she touched.

John Scott had solved many problems, but that of resolving a triangle into a family circle still remained.

So one morning he took the train for the County Seat on his way to Washington again. John spent some time with Judge Williams arranging legal matters, and then visited Dr. Bears' hospital, telling the doctor that he wished to have a chance to talk to Macel while there. She came to him after awhile in the hospital parlor, looking very neat and clean in her uniform of white and pale blue. She was thinner and looked older and had lost some of the color that marked her cheeks at their first meeting a few years before, but the serious look on her face and the flash of her eyes showed plainly that, while she may have been discouraged at one time, she was by no means cast down now. She was pleased at the visit and showed it. John, himself, had looked forward to it with a sense of curious anticipation. They talked for a few minutes, no doubt each trying to read the other's mind then John said, "Macel, I am leaving for Washington tomorrow and if you will go, I would like to take you for a little drive this afternoon."

"I would love to go," answered Macel, "if Dr. Bears will let me off."

"I will arrange that," answered John, and then going to the door, asked an attendant to

inform Dr. Bears that he wished to see him as soon as convenient. In a few minutes the doctor came in and John said, "Doctor, Macel and I are old friends and I would like to visit with her awhile. Can you relieve her from duty this afternoon so that we may take a drive?"

"Certainly," answered the doctor. "She may have the whole afternoon if you want it."

"I'll be around for you about two o'clock," said John rising.

At two o'clock John drove up to the hospital and Macel came out to join him. She was dressed in a dark brown suit with hat to match. Her checks showed more color than in the morning and as she smiled at John, she looked very much the same girl that had eaten at the box supper with him a few years before.

They drove rapidly for awhile and then more slowly for a few miles. Then hitching the horse in the shade of a tree, they climbed a knoll overlooking the valley and sat down under a walnut tree. John soon got Macel's short story of the past year's experience and he in return told her much of his life in France and England.

Finally, John asked her about the treatment and whether or not Dr. Bears thought she was

entirely well. Macel answered that she had had three negative blood tests and that the doctor had assured her that she was safe. And then she added, "Oh, John, you know how it is, a girl has got to be one thing if nothing else—she must be decent or she is nothing. I am decent, I think you know that I am not a bad girl, but I am damaged, damaged, damaged goods. I am just nothing at all."

"Of course, you made a mistake," answered John, "but you did it innocently. It was not your fault and no good man or woman can blame you for it."

"The spots are there, John," she answered. "No difference how they got there, people don't care. They will never come out."

"You could not help it," responded John. "Forget it."

"I cannot forget it," she answered, "and that is not all. I was a silly girl anyhow; I drank whiskey and allowed those men to kiss me at the hotel. I was actually drunk and was out in the night with those strange, bad men, engaged in a drunken fight where one man was killed. I may even have to go into court some time and tell that. Oh, I thought I was a ruined, disgraced girl and would have been

turned out of my school if people had found it out."

"Not a bad girl, Marcel," answered John. "You are good. You are not even damaged goods. You may have been soiled but it's all right now."

"A woman soiled is a woman spoiled," she answered.

"You are too serious about it," answered John Scott.

"Oh, but I am not," she answered. "I have made up my mind that I will never marry again. I intend to be a nurse all my life."

"You have that settled, have you?" John asked.

"Yes," she replied, "that is settled."

He urged no further and when he left her at the door of Dr. Bears' hospital, they bid each other goodbye as friends and John was surprised and really pleased that he felt no regrets. One angle of the triangle had been eliminated, there remained only a straight line —one end of which was in Pittsburgh and the other in Charleston.

John spent three months in Washington, during which time he made one trip back into the mountains where he was having his business

settled up and his property disposed of as rapidly as possible.

After the Christmas holidays, he decided to go at once to Charleston in order to be there at the opening of the State Legislature. He had not been in regular correspondence with Clare Worthington, but several short letters had passed between them and he was anxious to see her again; so he decided to make the long deferred trip to Pittsburgh enroute from Washington.

On arriving in Pittsburgh, John registered at the William Penn, and almost immediately called the Worthington residence on the telephone and was agreeably surprised when Clare herself answered him.

"In Pittsburgh at last," she said, "but where?"

"At the William Penn," he answered, "and I want to see you and thank you in person for being here or anywhere else."

"Oh, you lonesome man," she answered. "I am coming right down after you."

"Don't hurry," answered John. "Just come in time for dinner with me here."

"All right," she answered. "I will be there at six and will give further orders then."

They dined together at six, and John found that she had told her father very little of the service she had been to him in France and England. Clare then called her car and in a short time John found himself in the Worthington home, which was not the mansion he had pictured in his mind, but just a good roomy, homey home.

Clare's mother was very much what Clare herself might be thirty years hence, a well preserved woman who took an interest in her family and a pride in her home. The two younger brothers were still in France but safe. The war was over and they were expected back soon. Mr. Worthington greeted John warmly and he spent a very happy evening with them, but felt it his duty to acquaint them with his obligations to the daughter of the house; and when Mr. Worthington referred to their business transaction in Washington, John laughingly told him that his coal lands would have cost the firm of W. W. Worthington & Company at least one hundred thousand dollars more had he not wished to deal leniently with the father of the girl who had saved his life. Mr. Worthington said he was mighty glad she had saved it as another hundred thou-

sand would have taken the gold fillings out of his teeth.

John remained in Pittsburgh three days, during which time he weighed carefully his feelings and tried to appraise Clare's heart. He felt convinced that she admired him very much and was more than a friend, but somehow it seemed hard to talk to her of love. One thing was evident, she did not "wear her heart on her sleeve." When he thought of her as his wife, it seemed a pleasant anticipation, but he could not make up his mind that he really wanted her badly, so he bade her good bye, both expressing a hope that they would meet again soon. Another angle was eliminated from the triangle and the straight line pointed in one direction only, and that was to Charleston.

Miska and the children were spending a very happy and instructive winter, looking forward to John's visit, now daily expected. It was with little surprise, therefore, that Miska heard John voice one evening calling from the Kanawha Hotel.

"You are coming right up, aren't you?" she asked.

"Not just now," he answered. "I'll come up

later, but I want you to come down to the Kanawha for dinner with me at six. Come all dolled up. The lobby will be full of statesmen, the Legislature is in session you know."

John was watching for her and together they entered the dining room. Although discharged from the army, John had elected to wear his uniform that evening and with Miska dressed as becomingly as a tailored suit can make a beautiful woman appear, they made a distinguished looking couple. Besides, John was no stranger to many of the people present and the whisper "that is Captain Scott" was soon passed around.

The newly elected President of the State Senate stopped at John's table and shaking hands warmly, looked at Miska inquiringly, saying, "And this is Mrs. Scott, I presume."

In that instant, all doubt of what he wanted and what he must have vanished from John's mind. He wanted more than anything else to be able to say, "Yes, Senator, this is Mrs. Scott," but his answer was, "Not yet, but soon," at which Miska blushed and turned pale and then blushed again.

When the Senator had passed on Miska looked at John and asked, "What did you mean, John?"

"Just exactly what I said, Miska," he answered. "You are going to be Mrs. John Scott soon if I have money enough to buy a license and pay a preacher. I did not want to break the news to you in a public dining room, but that man forced my hand."

After supper they seated themselves on the balcony overlooking the crowded lobby of the hotel where scores of men were coming and going and little knots of politicians were grouped together. Directly a tall distinguished looking man came in.

"That's Governor Cornwell," said Miska.

"Yes," answered John, "I had a conference with him this afternoon. He wants me to head the new Public Utilities Commission, but I declined."

Suddenly, John said, "Miska, you look bigger. You have grown, haven't you?"

"I weigh one hundred pounds," answered Miska. "That is more than I ever weighed before, I think."

"When will we have the wedding?" asked John.

"What wedding?" Miska asked.

"Why, ours," he answered.

"John Scott, if you want me to marry you,

you will have to ask me to. You will have to tell me that you love me, that you can't live without me, and that I am the most beautiful woman in the world."

John twisted his face into a wry grin.

"Miska," he said, "this is a mighty queer place for us to do our courting. Coming down out of the mountains and into a crowded hotel lobby to tell each other what we have both had in our hearts for years but did not know it. I love you, Miska, and always have, I think. I want you more than any other woman, and to me you are the best, sweetest and most beautiful woman in the world. Now, will you marry me?"

"I'll have to, I guess," she answered, and slapping him lightly on the cheek, jumped up saying, "Let's go home and tell the girls."

"And then for some little church around the corner," added John.

Chapter XXV.

Trail's End.

"Till the stars grow old
And the sun grows cold,
And the leaves of the Judgment Book unfold."

* * * * *

This little story is about told, but the mountains of West Virginia still remain, and still along their rugged sides and up and down their fertile valleys other people are living other lives of other unwritten stories, stories that may never be written except upon the hearts and minds of a passing generation.

The Great World War has come to an end. Camp Zero, which once sheltered the hosts of the Great Napoleon and then the misguided derelicts of a later war, is now again a Park of Peace, dedicated to a reconstructed, war ridden France. The poppies are blooming on Flanders Fields but the white crosses "row on row" stand a mute reminder to those who might not keep the faith.

Dr. Johnson never returned to his family. "Somewhere in France" his body lies in an un-

marked grave. He was of those who in the morning of the Resurrection, will say, "I fell in France," and of whom a broken hearted family among the West Virginia hills may answer, "I mourned my dead." His yellow mule may disappear from the earth and his saddle moulder to dust, but the *soul* of a good man can never die. The greater Creator of Souls may pass it on to other men, who knows. It may repose in a paradise until all are called for the great Reckoning, we do not know. It may be that it sits again in the shadows by its own fireside, and hovers lovingly over those who are near and dear. Life is still an unsolved puzzle and death an unpenetrated mystery.

Of Leroy Morrison we need say very little. If you wish to see him you need only to stand on the street corner of any city. He will soon pass by. He may be in the garb of a laborer or even that of a man of affairs, but you will easily recignize him by his stumpy, ataxic gait or by his furtive, half demented look, but you will notice him as he passes and as he repasses again.

Macel also may easily be found. You have seen her many times but probably did not know it. It is she who leads you through the halls

of our great hospitals. It is her gentle hand that smoothes the sheet over many suffering forms, and her saint like sympathy which has led many departing souls to the Mount of Transfiguration. Her name is known and loved among the Holy of Holies, for it is legion. It might have been Edith Cavil in Belgium or Clara Barton in America, but it was not; for Macel Adams is by no means a type of our great nursing profession except in her acts of kindness and deed of charity which are not confined to any class or profession among the many activities of the noble women of our land.

Mrs. Johnson in the mountains about Altoona is now an Angel of Mercy in many stricken homes where her husband had been for so long a welcome visitor.

Clare Worthington still lives with her parents in Pittsburgh. Some day some man "like John Scott" will woo and win her love. The same determined spirit that carried her across the English Channel and into the heart of London with the broken body of her ideal man, will still carry her safely into some yet unknown harbor where her "ship will come in" laden with all her heart's desires. The daughter of W. W. Worthington will never fail in her

duty or be led astray by false signals into untried paths.

Henry and Clara are living a contented life with no cloud to darken their horizon, except perhaps the thought of old age which must and does come to us all. And we can picture them years hence in the evening of life, sitting before a dying fire. Clara's knitting needles have ceased to click and have fallen into silence in her lap. Henry's gray head is bowed upon his cane and together they are holding communion with spirits that never were. Children in blond, flowing curls, womanly girls and manly boys, almost even young men, come and stand beside them, but when they reach out the vision has vanished. Henry and Clara will live their lives in peace but the next generation will not remember it.

Our last picture leads us to the banks of the Great Kanawha not far from the State Capital, where we find a wonderful farm of some hundred of acres of rolling hillside and fertile bottoms. On a gently rising knoll some coal baron has built a mansion and cultivated grounds of great beauty. Paved roads and graveled walks surround it, and red tiled towers and shingled lodges meet the visitor at every turn. Pure

bred stock graze contentedly in the pastures, while machinery of the latest model makes labor a matter of mechanics rather than of muscular strength.

A little matron with the form of a Greek but with the face of a Madonna is gazing from the shadowed porch into the close of another September day. Far across the fields a man on horseback is rapidly approaching. He comes closer and closer and finally stops by her feet.

"Ho! A letter from the girls at Lewisburg?" he asks.

"Yes, John," answered Miska, "and they all like it fine, and just love their teachers."

"Of course, they do. They couldn't help it. They are built that way, Miska, and I'll bet their teachers love them. They could not be human and help that either."

"And, John," said Miska, "Johnsy Junior has just gone to sleep. He has been celebrating a new tooth."

"Tell it to the Marines," laughed John, "and see what they can do about it."

Then reaching his arm around her, he lifted her to his saddle and cantered away to the barn where Harry was trying to teach Pincher a new fox trot invented by him especially for dogs.

We have come to the "trail's end". There are other trails and other days, but the curtain of night closes down upon us and we can only look forward to another September morning.

(The End.)